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AN INCUMBENT ACTUALLY WINS!

RANDY ORTON

ANOTHER TERM AS WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

+

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WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. Airplane spin
2. Arm drag
3. Arm lock
4. Asian spike
5. Atomic drop
6. Bear hug
7. Bite
8. Body slam
9. Body tackle
10. Bulldog
11. Chicken wing
12. Choke slam
13. Claw
14. Clothesline
15. Cross body block
16. Double axehandle
17. Drop kick
18. Eagle split
19. Elbow smash
20. Eye gouge
21. Face rake
22. Fireman's carry ram
23. Flying body press
24. Flying clothesline
25. Flying drop kick
26. Flying elbow drop
27. Flying head butt
28. Flying mare
29. Forearm smash
30. Foreign object
31. Full nelson
32. Giant swing
33. Grapevine
34. Hair pull
35. Hammer lock
36. Head lock
37. Head stomp
38. Hip roll
39. Irish whip
40. Knee drop
41. Leg lock
42. Leg sweep
43. Manager interference
44. Monkey flip
45. Overhead toss
46. Pole ram
47. Reverse chin lock
48. Rolling scissors
49. Rope burn
50. Russian sickle
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wrist lock

SET-UP HOLDS

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Avalanche
63. Backbreaker
64. Backroll press
65. Belly to belly
66. Big splash
67. Boston crab
68. Brain buster
69. Camel clutch
70. Cobra clutch
71. Cradle
72. Crucifix
73. DDT
74. Figure four
75. Flying leg drop
76. Gourd buster
77. Hurricanrana
78. Moonsault
79. Neckbreaker
80. Piledriver
81. Power bomb
82. Power slam
83. Scorpion deathlock
84. Sleeper
85. Slingshot suplex
86. Spine buster
87. Stunner
88. Sunset flip
89. Superplex
90. Texas cloverleaf

YOUR NAME (PRINT NEATLY) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE _____

WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES) _____

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS: *Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: *Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: *Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.* _____

FROM THE DESK OF...

I'M WRITING THIS column and the phone rings. It's Terry McDonell, my counterpart at *Sports Illustrated.* "Stu," he says, "I've admired your work for a long time and I think you'd be a nice fit here at *SI.* Of course, you wouldn't be hired to be the publisher. You'd have start near the bottom as an assistant editor and you'd probably have to take a bit of a cut in pay."

"Well, Terry," I answer, "it's always been a dream of mine to work for *SI,* but I'm the publisher here at PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED and I'm very happy doing what I'm doing. If it's okay, can I think this over?"

For the record, the above conversation never took place and probably never will. If I still have a job application on file at *SI,* it's more than 30 years old, and I think that particular magazine had laid off more people than it's hired over the past few years. The only phone call that interrupted the writing of this column was from my wife, who wanted to know if I went home at lunchtime to let the dog out.

A few months back, Ring of Honor heavyweight champion Tyler Black received a call from WWE's office of talent relations and was offered a position with the company. No, he would not be on the Raw or Smackdown rosters, gunning for a world championship. His body of work in ROH might have enabled him to get his foot in the door, but that door would be down in Tampa, Florida, for WWE's developmental company, Florida Championship Wrestling.

It's the opportunity every young wrestler strives for, but in Black's case, it was an opportunity with a significant price tag. He had been the number-one man in the country's number-three promotion. He's been in the top 20 of the "*PWI* 500" for the past two years. He'll be in the "500" again this year, but it's highly doubtful he'll makes the top 50. And don't look for the name Tyler Black; he is now Seth Rollins. Yes, he's made some sacrifices.

"Indeed he has," said Desmond Wolfe, who lost his name in the move from Ring of Honor to TNA in 2009. "But he's what ... 24 years old? This is the best time in his life to do this. Look, it's probably going to be tough on him for a bit—and not just because he's no longer the Ring of Honor champion. They're going to rebuild him from the ground up and make him a WWE-style wrestler. Depending on where his head is at, that can be a bitter pill."

Though Rollins lost his FCW debut to Michael McGillicutty and was, surprisingly, not named to the Season Four *NXT* roster, he is convinced that he has made the right decision for the long haul, as a recent post at wwerollins.blogspot.com would indicate.

"I'm still the same kid from Iowa with a dream in my heart and a belief in hard work, in dedication. Often with success comes complacency, but not me, not now, not ever. There are fears in me now that are greater than any I have ever encountered. There are challenges that stand before me now, like mountains. This is my Everest, but I will relent not.

"They can kill my name, disparage my accomplishments, destroy everything I've built, but they cannot touch my conviction. I ...we ... we're too strong and we will take this world and make it our own."

I, for one, think he's made the right decision. As for me, well, I'm just fine where I am. I would have turned down *Sports Illustrated.*

Stu Saks
Publisher

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LOOK FOR THE APRIL 2011 ISSUE OF *PWI PRESENTS* (*WRESTLING ANNUAL*), ON SALE FEBRUARY 15, 2011

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CHECK OUT OUR BLOG AT prowrestlingillustrated.blogspot.com

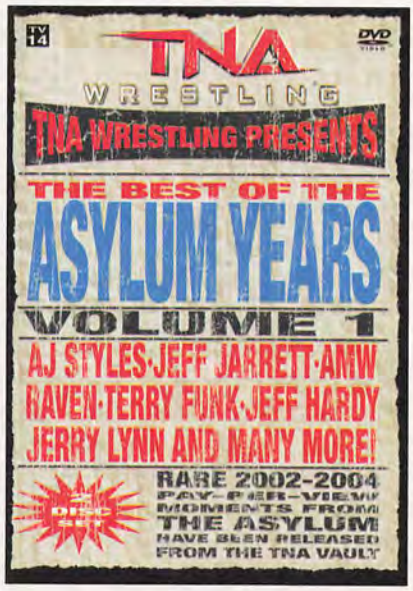
BEFORE THE BELL

COMPILED BY MIKE BESSLER

THE BEST OF THE ASYLUM YEARS, VOLUME 1

A brash, young wrestling company. A throng of rabid fans packed into a cozy venue. An unforgiving concrete floor. High spots, hard hits, and plenty of the red stuff. Although the scene is unmistakably reminiscent of the original ECW at its prime, a strikingly similar scenario unfolded less than a decade ago on the premises of the Tennessee State Fairgrounds in Nashville. In an arena known affectionately to fans as "The Asylum," Total Nonstop Action Wrestling laid an impressive foundation for its future as a major player in the world of professional wrestling.

TNA's recent DVD offering, *The Best Of The Asylum Years, Volume 1,* documents the formative years of the promotion. The two-disc set collects more than 20 matches recorded from 2002 to 2004, showcasing a veritable who's who of wrestling's movers and shakers. The pioneers of TNA's early years take center stage in this compendium. TNA founder and promoter Jeff Jarrett, hardcore antihero Raven, and "The Phenomenal One" AJ Styles compete in a variety of matches throughout the program, often in contention for the NWA heavyweight title.



Best Of The Asylum Years is surprisingly short on tag team action, with just a handful of such matches amidst a plethora of singles bouts. Special matches, including X division contests, three-way dances, ladder matches, and cage matches showcase the palpable spirit of adventure and creativity in TNA's formative years in Nashville. The appeal of TNA as a fresh and viable contender in the wrestling business becomes evident through the tremendous array of talent that is involved in this collection.

From established veterans like Dusty Rhodes, Jimmy Hart, and Terry Funk to younger stars like CM Punk, Jeff Hardy, and Abyss, *The Asylum Years* features some of the most celebrated performers in professional wrestling. From the 2002 ladder match between Ken Shamrock and Sabu to Styles' first NWA title victory in 2003, this DVD set is replete with nostalgic moments and milestones. Commentary segments featuring TNA stars of the past and present provide insight and perspective on the development and evolution of the company.

While *Best Of The Asylum Years* is a compelling chronicle of wrestling history and a tremendous compilation of pillar-to-post action, a few foibles may not sit well with overly particular fans or sensitive types. Pickier folks might notice a smattering of blown spots and an occasional instance of sloppy in-ring work. A few gross-out moments manifest throughout the course of the program as well, including a number of exceptionally bloody bouts and the memorable sight of Shane Douglas vomiting in the ring during his 2003 meeting with Raven.

Despite some minor glitches, *Best Of The Asylum Years* is consistently entertaining. Chalk up any shortcomings or gratuitous envelope-pushing to a fledgling company's drive to entertain and compete with the legacy of "extreme" and Attitude Era sports entertainment.

All in all, *The Best Of The Asylum Years* is a star-studded time capsule full of informative vignettes and pulse-pounding excitement. For its commendable cast of talent, an extensive selection of intriguing and compelling matches, and an unabashed presentation of wrestling at its grittiest, *The Best Of The Asylum Years* garners four out of five suplexes.

TALKIN' TRASH

Here's a list of the top 10 wrestling-related items you've been talking about lately and our gut reactions to each

10. After an aggressive and expensive campaign, Linda McMahon loses her bid for a seat in the U.S. Senate. After many months of playing it safe with family-oriented, electorate-friendly programming, maybe WWE can let it all hang out and bid farewell to the "PG" era once and for all ... Or at least until the next election cycle, anyway.

9. Ring of Honor grapplers El Generico and Kevin "Mr. Wrestling" Steen close out their epic rivalry with a "mask vs. career" match at Final Battle 2010. Should the manhandling mauler Steen hang up his tights for good after this match, he might well enjoy a promising post-wrestling career performing enhanced pat-downs for the TSA at airports across America.

8. Subsequent to Ken Anderson's recent concussion at the hands of Jeff Hardy, TNA moves to protect its talent by banning unprotected chair shots to the head. For the protection of its fans, TNA should also consider banning Jeff Jarrett from conducting anymore long, boring MMA demonstrations.

7. Natalya wins the Divas championship at Survivor Series. And a legion of appreciative wrestling fans all shout in unison: "FINALLY!"

6. CM Punk joins the *Monday Night Raw* broadcast team. Punk's in-ring experience, as well as his knowledge and quick wit, make him a natural for this gig. With time and practice, perhaps he might someday become known as "The Thinking Man's Matt Striker."

5. Following the official retirement of Team 3-D, Brother Ray attacks Brother Devon, blaming him for the legendary duo's ultimate downfall. Blood banks around the country are bolstering their reserves in anticipation of a vicious and brutal feud.

4. The power of Ric Flair's Fortune is shaken by the defections of Matt Morgan and Doug Williams. It was just a matter of time before the combined stress of politics and ego took a toll on this super-team.

3. In an effort to weaken the resolve of reigning WWE World champion Kane, Edge kidnaps Paul Bearer, subjecting him to unrelenting torment and harassment. Is it a show of courage or is it just plain insanity to provoke a guy who counts an urn and a meat hook as his best friends?

2. Hulk Hogan and Company unveil the new TNA "Immortal" championship belt. It's the kind of top-notch accessory that one might find at a comic book super-villain's yard sale ... or at the bottom of a really, really big box of Cracker Jacks.

1. The Miz cashes in his title shot to become WWE champion. The last guy to make it this far with a bad haircut and some money in the bank was Donald Trump.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

FIGHTING FARE *A look at new and vintage wrestling collectibles*

On the business side of professional wrestling, the battle for supremacy extends beyond the squared circle, spilling into the racks and shelves of retailers worldwide.The burgeoning trading card market provides a prime example of wrestling merchandising at its finest.

WWE, partnering with Topps, offers a variety of trading card series, including the kid-friendly "Rumble Pack." Typical cards in this collection feature action shots of current wrestlers, but most packs include stickers, tattoos, punch-out finger puppets, or other specialty cards. In late-2010, Topps and WWE also launched the trading card game, "Slam Attax: Mayhem." This series draws upon the success of other successful card games like "Magic: The Gathering," effectively combining interactive play with collectability.

Vying for its own share of the market, TNA, in conjunction with TRISTAR productions, launched the new series of Icons trading cards in mid-2010. In addition to its finely produced series of standard, portrait-style cards, the cards provide biographical sketches and quirky bits of trivia.Additionally, the Icons collection includes a wide array of "memorabilia cards" featuring autographs and pieces of ring-worn gear. In late-2010, TNA and TRISTAR launched their new Xtreme series, paying tribute to the members of EV2.0 with a special collection dedicated to the heroes of hardcore. Also included in this collection are memorabilia cards boasting larger, "Xtreme size" swatches of ring-worn gear as well as the artwork of multi-talented TNA World champion Jeff Hardy.

Sure, these cards are a lot of fun, but they're serious business, too. Online auctions fetch between $10 and $20 for "relic cards" with pieces of pay-per-view ring canvas and swatches from T-shirts belonging to the likes of CM Punk, The Miz, and Santino Marella. For high-rolling card moguls, $60 to $70 might land a limited edition card bearing genuine lipstick prints of Taylor Wilde or Angelina Love.

ONE TO WATCH: JAMILIA CRAFT

Youth is a temporary asset; its advantages are many, yet fleeting. Jamilia Craft, a 19-year-old newcomer to the independent wrestling scene, is one wrestler who is bound and determined to make an impact on the business while the fire of youth still burns within her.

Hailing from Philadelphia, home of celebrated promotions such as the original ECW and Ring of Honor, Craft gained a healthy appreciation for pro wrestling as a young WWE fan. Although Jamilia respected the efforts of celebrated female grapplers like Mickie James and Lita, it was the work of male gladiators, such as Triple-H and Chris Jericho, that ultimately inspired her, leading her to seriously consider wrestling as a career.

At the age of 17, Craft entered the SHIMMER course at the Ring of Honor Academy in Bristol, Pennsylvania. "My parents didn't have a lot of money," explains Craft, "so I worked hard and saved up so I could pay my own way."

Craft was trained by SHIMMER mainstay Daizee Haze, who shared some important insight and perspective. "Daizee changed my perception of what women can do in wrestling," Craft said.

Jamilia's distinctive regalia is a testament to her creativity and her enthusiasm. Her outfit and mask are made to her own custom-designed specifications and suggest the unmistakable influence of lucha libre. Indeed, she includes a smattering of lucha moves in her growing repertoire, but she generally prides herself as a technical, mat-heavy grappler.

Craft made her debut in January 2010, locking up with then-SHIMMER champion MsChif at a Pro Wrestling Respect event. Although she didn't score a victory in that particular outing, Craft would again meet MsChif in a tag bout less than two months later. At that meeting, MsChif and her partner, Haze, were bested by the upstart Craft and her teammate, Rayna von Tash.

In recent months, Craft has seen in-ring action through a number of promotions, including Women Superstars Uncensored, World Xtreme Wrestling, SHIMMER, and Ring of Honor. She's mixed it up with the likes of Sara Del Rey, Rain, The Belle Saints, and Tara.

In an industry where boastful egotism often obscures talent and ability, Jamilia Craft is remarkably focused on self-improvement and professional growth. "I'm only one year in and I want to keep working at this," she notes. Most importantly, she shares, "I want to keep living my dream."

WE HEARD THAT!

"It's not going to happen."

—Dana White, president of Ultimate Fighting Championship, to John Joe O'Regan of fightersonly.com on rumors that Brock Lesnar may return to competition in WWE to wrestle The Undertaker at WrestleMania 27 while still under contract with UFC

"Greatness is established over a long period of time. We try to promote people and get them over, but you can't do it that quickly. In our line of work, there are other qualities that make somebody viable besides just whether they're tough or not."

—Shawn Michaels, in an interview with *SB Nation Atlanta*, on the distinguishing characteristics of WWE Hall of Famers

"To all my loyal fans ... Many of [you] ask if I am going to go back to WWE. My answer is 'no.' My loyalty lies with Dixie and TNA. Never been happier."

—Kurt Angle via Twitter, commenting on his future

"There's always going to be one or two guys who feel that they should be getting the push that you're getting or should be getting the spot that you've got, but to be honest with you, they're definitely in the minority. It's something that WWE has pretty much stamped out in this day and age. I believe from reading books and hearing stories of the past that the politicking and things like that were commonplace, but in general nowadays, from what I understand, it's probably the most harmonious locker room it's ever been."

—Wade Barrett to Kevin Eck of the *Baltimore Sun*, discussing the backstage dynamics in the wake of the rise of The Nexus

"I think that things always have to change and evolve ... I think it keeps everybody competitive; there's a certain degree of keeping everybody on their toes ... I never like to see one of my brothers, you know, lose a job. But I've been on the outside looking in, and for me, it drove me. And, hopefully, it'll drive those guys to take strides and do whatever to get back."

—Ken Anderson in an interview with *Pro Wrestling Report,* commenting on TNA's recent string of releases

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

"For me to get in the ring with guys that are a lot younger than me and haven't had the experience I've had is great. It fuels me to try and stay ahead of the curve in terms of the wrestling scene, and to work good matches with them inspires me."

—Christopher Daniels to Darren Wood of Slam! Wrestling, on his recent work with Ring of Honor's younger talent

CAPTION ME!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at *PWI*? Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This shot of 1930s and '40s wrestler 625-pound Martin "The Blimp" Levy deserves a concise, and downright uproarious caption. If you think you are up to the challenge, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelop and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!," Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch—and the funnier the better!

DECEMBER'S BEST

Crusher: "Hold on Jesse, I'll have that corn out your foot in a minute!"
—Darren Oliver, darrenoparis@aol.com

"Boy, I just love the taste of 'da-feet.'"
—Asia Serrano, shawn13michaels@hotmail.com

Finally, Jesse Ventura puts his foot in someone else's mouth!"
—Dwayne Kerr, Ottawa, ON

The thrill of victory, the agony of da-feet.
—Maureen Long, Buffalo, NY

Moments later, Crusher was diagnosed with ptomaine poisoning.
—Bart Lefton, Aspen, CO

RINGSIDE

WITH BILL MELTZER

WWE IS LIKELY to be without the in-ring services of **CM Punk** for a while, but his absence may not be as long as initially feared. The former leader of the Straight Edge Society elected not to have surgery to repair a torn hip tendon and will instead undergo physical therapy to attempt to compensate for the injury. In June 2010, Punk underwent a surgical procedure on his arm when there were no other options available.

Punk, whose real-life beliefs preclude the use of pain-killing medications, wrestled with the hip problem as long as he could stand the pain. In a recent radio interview he said, "My body tells me when I can and can't withstand an injury. I have a pretty good pain threshold most of the time. Living Straight Edge, I might not be able to wrestle as long [with an injury] as some other guys, but in terms of staying healthy for the long term, this way is better off."

In the meantime, WWE officials have been thrilled with the mike work Punk has done as a commentator on *Raw*. **Vince McMahon** reportedly gave Punk the green light to speak his mind freely on the air, and the results thus far have been gratifying for both sides. Upon his return, Punk has made it clear that he intends to first target U.S. champion **Daniel Bryan**.

Here's an item from the wrestling world's overflowing "Can't We All Just Get Along?" files: Punk's former WWE arch-rival, TNA World Champion **Jeff Hardy**, recently posted a rambling and sometimes incoherent anti-Punk video on YouTube, declaring that Punk owes his WWE career to their feud. He labeled Punk a "nerd" (among other, less printable names) and said that "the good thing about planet earth is that we're all different—if everyone had to be like you, I'd rather go live on Pluto." With brother **Matt Hardy** seated nearby at a roadside diner, Hardy also mocked the WWE's adoption of TV PG standards, praising the greater freedom he has in TNA.

Shortly after press time for this issue, Hardy was scheduled to finally learn how much freedom he'd have in his immediate future. His oft-delayed trial on a host of felony drug possession and intended distribution charges was

While CM Punk *gets* healthy, he has given Raw viewers a healthy dose of some insightful commentary. It's pretty obvious that this man will have a job in WWE long after his wrestling days are over.

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Jack Swagger and Kofi Kingston have drawn rave reviews—by Christian in particular—for a series of matches they have had on *Smackdown*. "You can see how hungry both those guys are," Christian said.

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granted a brief postponement before press time. There have already been four postponements of the trial date.

Another "Can't We All Just Get Along?" item: Released WWE wrestler **Gregory "Hurricane" Helms** has repeatedly attacked retired legend **Shawn Michaels** on recent installments of his weekly *Highway 2 Helms* Web show. Helms called Michaels "the biggest hypocrite in the business" and said Michaels thought it was okay to "backstab a bunch of people, hurt careers and families, and slaughter animals for fun, but then pray on stage."

Via Twitter, Michaels responded that he'd only learned of Helms' comments secondhand, adding, "Verbal attack? Wow, pretty scary. [My] thoughts? Sticks and stones, I guess."

Michaels is currently working as a spokesman and ambassador for the Cross Trail Outfitters Ministry. An avid outdoorsman (hence, Helms' reference to slaughtering animals), Michaels is taking part in a fund-raising contest where the grand prize is a personal hunting trip with him. The "Heartbreak Kid" is also one of the celebrities slated to perform on the 4R Performance Horse Celebrity Slide event in Oklahoma City.

MVP has asked for and received his release from WWE and he plans to take a hiatus from wrestling after undertaking an international tour. The parting was said to be amicable and WWE officials informed MVP that they'd be interested in his services again the future, if he so chooses. MVP subsequently stated that he felt he needed a change of pace in his life and some time to consider what he wants to do in his career.

In his JR's Bar-B-Q blog, former WWE commentator **Jim Ross** wrote that he, like many, came to admire the man behind the MVP character. "I personally like MVP and have always enjoyed our relationship. He's a talented guy who has endured and overcome some major league challenges in his life. MVP's life might make for a good movie as a matter of fact. I always preferred the antagonist MVP better than the fan favorite MVP, but that's merely a personal preference. The guy is a survivor. He'll persevere and be just fine."

Mick Foley recently nixed a heel turn storyline suggested to him by TNA's creative team. He told SunSport's WrestleCast show, "In the bigger picture—and I think TNA has got to start looking at the bigger picture more often—I could be a lot more effective as somebody who goes out there and talks about serious issues."

Regarding the direction of the TNA product, the ever-candid Foley said that although he'll always be best known for comedy and for his hardcore style matches of the past, "I still think there should be more wrestling. That's my major complaint. We have the guys who can do it. It is a wrestling show. It is called Total Nonstop Action. It's an easy solution. I still think it should be more wrestling-driven. That way, when you do your angles, it means

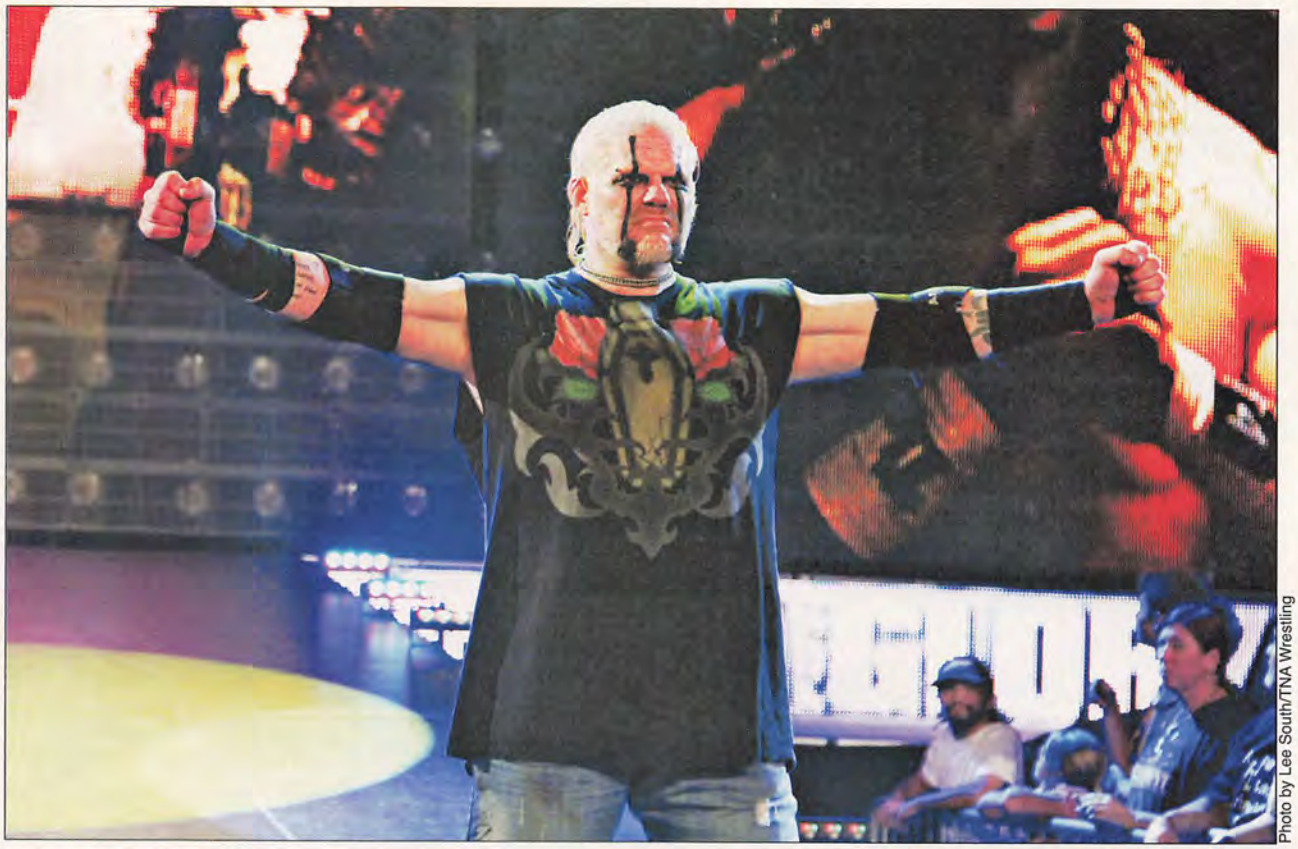


Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Raven made a splash upon leaving TNA, pinning former World champion AJ Styles at a non-televised event in Tennessee. That's some consolation for Raven, but as for Styles, let's just say that his year didn't finish quite as well as it started.

more. Your promos mean more. I hope they give it a try."

If **Kofi Kingston** is frustrated by his persistent mid-card status in WWE, it has not shown in his recent performances. His series of house-show matches and a pair of show-stealing bouts with **Jack Swagger** on *Smackdown* have outshined more highly touted matches. Among those who have praised their matches, **Christian** said, "You can see how hungry both those guys are. They are both elevating each other's game in a good way, to have the best possible matches, and it shows."

Although **Raven** has been written out *TNA Impact* storylines and effectively released from the company after losing a match with Jeff Hardy in which Raven's employment was at stake, he scored a huge upset win over **AJ Styles** at a house show in Nashville shortly after his final television appearance. Raven executed a sudden DDT and pinned the former world champion cleanly.

New TNA referee **Jackson James** is the son of company co-head **Eric Bischoff**. The real-life **Garrett Bischoff**, whose family ties are not yet being acknowledged on the air (and may not be for the foreseeable future), trained at **The Nasty Boys** wrestling school in Florida before debuting in TNA.

WWE recently cleaned house of many of its developmental talents whom the company did not feel were progressing in Florida Championship Wrestling. Among those getting pink slips are **Dr. Cable Jones**, **Devin Allen**, **Fahd Rakman**, **Ron Myers**, **Rhys Ali**, and referee **Daniel Skylar**.

WWE has been toying with the idea for several years of building a physical WWE Hall of Fame and museum. The company has been soliciting proposals from various cities across the country. The early favorite in the process appears to be Orlando, Florida. WWE officials will only say the process is in the "very preliminary stages," but said that they are open to ideas that include combinations of public-sector and private-sector funding or private sponsorship, especially in locales that have an already-established tourism industry.

The wrestling community is mourning the recent deaths of **Edouard Carpentier** and **"King" Curtis Iaukea**, **Jack Laskin**, and **Chris Long**. There have also been several notable recent passings in the international wrestling world *(see International Report, page 24).*

Nicknamed "The Flying Frenchman," Carpentier was one of the most popular fan favorites of the 1950s through the early-1970s, and continued his career with less frequent appearances until retirement a decade later. He headlined bouts throughout Canada and remains arguably the most beloved wrestling figure of all-time in the French-speaking province of Quebec. A classically trained gymnast

Edouard Carpentier incorporated his gymnastics ability into his wrestling repertoire, creating a style that has often been mimicked, but never duplicated. "The Flying Frenchman" recently died at age 84

who competed in gymnastics the 1948 (London) and 1952 (Helsinki) Olympics, Carpentier was one of the first wrestlers in the world to routinely employ acrobatic aerial maneuvers into his repertoire. His most famous feuds were with **Maurice "Mad Dog" Vachon**, **Paul "The Butcher" Vachon**, and **Killer Kowalski**. The 84-year-old Carpentier passed away after suffering a heart attack.

Iaukea was every bit the legend in Hawaii that Carpentier was in Canada. A clean-cut fan favorite in the late-1950s and early-1960s, Iaukea evolved into one of the most fearsome heels in the business. Known for his wild hair and beard, severely battle-scarred forehead, bugged-out eyes, and fearsome volcanic voice, the 6'4", 300-pound Iaukea terrorized fan favorites throughout the Hawaiian islands as well as engaging in numerous tours of territories in the contiguous U.S. (most notably, the WWWF), Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Despite his dastardly persona, Iaukea made countless friends inside and outside of wrestling and was known as one of the business' kindest, most humble, and soft-spoken figures away from the ring. In the mid-1980s, he shaved his head and had a stint as **The Wizard**, the manager of **Wild Samoan Sika** and **Kamala the Ugandan Giant**.

Iaukea held the WWWF World tag team championship in 1972 with Baron Mikel Scicluna, who died in March. □

DON'T MISS "THE TURN" WITH FRANK INGIOS

EXCLUSIVELY ON: pwi-online.com

Ingiosi On Ben Roethlisberger's *Raw* Appearance: "It's one thing to get the publicity you're craving, and it's something completely different to get it at the expense of your own industry's eyelash-thin credibility. Guess what, WWE: They weren't presenting Roethlisberger's appearance as a legitimate sports story. No, they were not laughing with you, they were laughing completely, totally, 100 percent at you."

Ingiosi On Hulk Hogan in TNA: "Okay, stop me if you've heard this one: Ric Flair, Hulk Hogan, Eric Bischoff, Jeff Hardy, Jeff Jarrett, Orlando Jordan, Scott Hall, Sean Waltman, Shannon Moore, Val Venis, Bubba the Love Sponge, and The Nasty Boys walk into a bar, which proceeds to collapse upon itself because you've actually entered the fourth level of hell."

Ingiosi On Donald Trump's "Ownership" Of Raw: "Still, I think my favorite part is how they're literally playing up the notion that Donald Trump has been a wrestling fan his whole life. Listen, he's only as big a fan as his options allow. Were Dana White to come calling (which he wouldn't), 'The Donald' would have been a 'huge MMA' fan all of his life. Hell, if *Covergirl* called, he'd go on record as being a huge fan of makeup his whole life. He's a businessman; it's what they do."

Ingiosi on the January 4 *Impact-Raw* Showdown: "WWE countered Hogan's debut with, easily, the biggest return in the company's history by having Bret Hart serve as guest host. Sure, the rest of the show was painful to watch but, hey, who expects the writers to focus on the other 80 minutes of broadcasting, right?"

7813/05.09

QUICK COUNT

BY AL CASTLE

THE ACADEMY OF Motion Picture Arts and Sciences may constantly try to reinvent the Oscars (The Green Goblin's kid and that *Princess Diaries* girl hosting this year? As The Miz would say, "Really?"). But one thing that doesn't need reinventing is my annual Oscar-themed edition of "Quick Count," featuring the titles of some of this year's big contenders.

Enjoy, and don't forget to thank the Academy.

INCEPTION

Making money in the pro wrestling business was tough in 2010, even for the biggest players. Now, imagine trying to start a national wrestling company in this economic climate.

Even with fans' disposable income stretched to the limit, several would-be promoters tried to make a splash in the wrestling business last year. Predictably, none exactly set the world on fire.

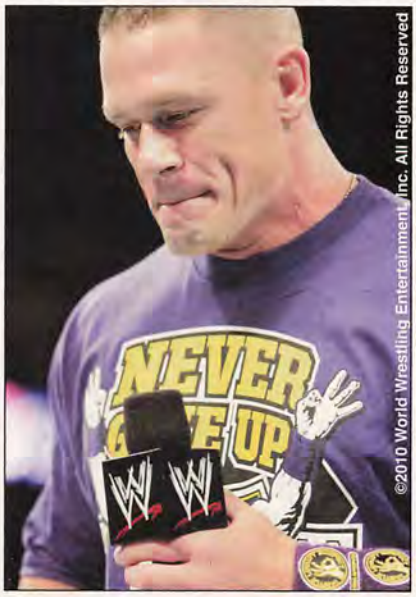
There was the rumored new wrestling promotion by Milton Wilpon, a member of the family that owns the New York Mets. Wilpon reportedly had visions of signing big names, landing a big TV deal, and even offering insurance and other benefits to his talent. Months after the rumors began circulating, the project appears dead in the water.

Lucha Libre USA got a major boost by landing a partnership with MTV, but despite the television its stars, the attempt to Americanize Mexico's wrestling stars failed to gain any momentum.

The only startup wrestling promotion that appeared to have any future was Gabe Sapolsky's EVOLVE Wrestling, which ran some moderately successful shows in 2010, and planned for more in 2011. By keeping its vision—and his budget—modest, EVOLVE just might ride out the recession.

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

In his emotional speech on *Monday Night Raw* the night after being "fired" from WWE, John Cena had some fun acknowledging the fact that his cheering section consisted largely of children, while most adult males tend to greet him with chants of "Cena sucks."



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John Cena has shown great poise in dealing with both his fans and detractors. His ability to play the good vs. evil scenario so well is exactly what Al Castle thinks wrestling needs right now.

Indeed, for several years now, Cena has been the target of ridicule and contempt by most male wrestling fans over the age 16. There's a good chance that you may be among them.

But while Cena's detractors might consider themselves far too sophisticated and cynical to cheer on their little brothers' favorite wrestler, the reality is that in this case, little bro may know best.

With many adult wrestling fans having come up in an era in which anti-heroes like DeGeneration-X and "Stone-Cold" Steve Austin were the ones who were cheered the loudest, Cena's had a tough road to hoe in winning them over by preaching "hustle, loyalty, and respect."

The problem is that wrestling has, at times, strayed too far away from the basic foundation of good storytelling, which is the battle between good and evil. And it's been hard to get back on course.

The morality play of that is pro wrestling works best when the lines between good and evil are clearly drawn, and the fans cheer the heroes and boo the villains. And so, for the sake of the sport, "Let's go Cena!"

TOY STORY

One of the most fun aspects of raising a young wrestling fan is getting a chance to do something I loved doing as a kid: shopping for and playing with wrestling toys.

Rummaging through the shelves of WWE action figures with my son at Toys "R" Us is a familiar feeling. I can vividly remember the Christmas of 1985, when Santa delivered a bunch of rubber LJN WWF figures under my tree, Remco AWA figures, as well as a couple of wrestling rings. The AWA's was cooler because it was had an actual cloth apron, cover-

ing a cardboard mat that made just the right sound when you slammed mini-Rick Martel down onto it.

Those toys are a far cry from today's highly articulated Mattel WWE figures, which go to great lengths to replicate every detail of Rey Mysterio Jr.'s back tattoo. But the lure of acting out your dream matches with bite-sized versions of your favorite wrestling superstars remains a timeless thrill for kids.

Okay, maybe for some of their dads, too.

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON

Far removed from the days when having a second-generation wrestler was something of a novelty, today it seems every other match on a WWE television show features the son or daughter of a wrestler I grew up watching as a kid.

Indeed, including its developmental system, WWE has no fewer than 20 performers under contract that are descendants of other wrestling greats.

But perhaps no second-generation competitor in WWE has bigger shoes to fill than one young man who most wrestling fans have never even seen compete—Richie Steamboat, who has been plying his trade in Florida Championship Wrestling since early-2010.

Steamboat's dad, Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat, is a former NWA World champion, WWE Intercontinental champion, U.S. champion, and member of many a wrestling hall of fame, including WWE's. He's also on many historians' short list of "the greatest of all-time."

Living up to his dad's legacy may be daunting for the younger Steamboat, but, as we're sure his father has told him, Richie Steamboat is best served following his own path, while at the same time knowing that his legendary father will help steer him in the right direction.

With the lifelike mobility of action figures these days, can you blame Al for wanting to get in on the fun of having The Undertaker slam CM Punk with a giant speaker? We can't.

THE KING'S SPEECH

When Jim Ross returned to the broadcast booth for the November 15 "Old School" edition of *Monday Night Raw*, WWE's announcing sounded the best it had in a long time. And it wasn't only because "Good Ol' J.R." returned. His longtime partner, Jerry Lawler, returned as well.

While Lawler's body and voice may have been present at the *Raw* announce table for years, it's been clear that his heart has been largely absent since WWE split up "The King" and Ross in June of 2008.

Lawler has remained competent and professional in his role, but clearly uninspired for the past couple of years. And who can blame him? Lawler has been saddled with mediocre-at-best announce partners, and put in the awkward spot of having to play off of Michael Cole's confusing mood swings.

Vince McMahon may still be reluctant to bring back Ross to *Raw,* but he should consider the amazing bargain he'd be getting: two great announcers for the price of one. □

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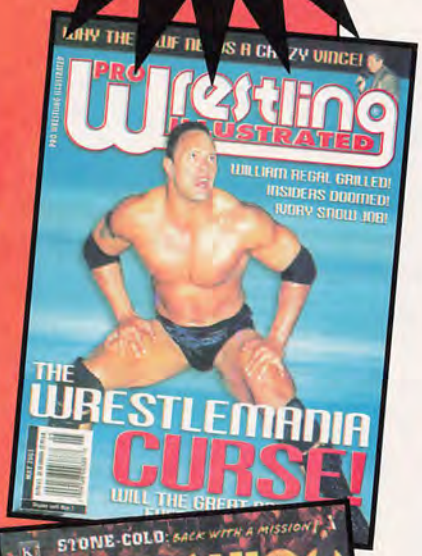

September 1990: The Hulkster's Wrath: 7,000 Miles To Violent Redemption. Centerfold: The Steiners. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Sting, Destruction Crew, Four Horsemen, Curt Hennig.

February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had Enough? Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Justice-Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

May 1992: Revitalized In Tokyo: Hulk Hogan Is Super-Psyched For WrestleMania VII! Centerfold: Rick Rude. Plus: Sting & Muta-Steiners, Jarrett & Fuller, Lightning Kid, Randy Savage, intimidation.

May 1998: Starrcade Scandal! We Hate To Say It ... But Give The Belt Back To Hogan. Centerfold: Ric Flair. Plus: Mero & Sable, Taz, Taka Michinoku.

October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.

April 1999: The Crock! The Title Change That Screwed The World! Centerfold: Chris Jericho. Plus: Bill Goldberg, Tommy Dreamer, Booker T, more Unofficial/Officials.

May 1999: Who Holds The Key To WrestleMania XV? Centerfold: Konnan. Plus: Mark Henry, Sting-Nash, Bill Alfonso, Brian Hildebrand.

June 1999: The PWI Poll. Plus: Mankind, Flair & Turner, VMac, Steiners, New Japan-UFO.

July 1999: Warning! This Team Will Self-Destruct In 15 Seconds! Centerfold: X-Pac. Plus: New Jack-Dudleys, Jesse James, Venis & Godfather, Sting-Bischoff-Flair.

October 1999: Why The World Must Fear Scott Steiner, By Buff Bagwell. Centerfold: Mankind. Plus: Kane & X-Pac, The Godfather, Perry Saturn, 20th anniversary readers' poll.

April 2000: Stone-Cold vs. The Rock: Let's Settle It At WrestleMania! Centerfold: Chris Benoit. Plus: Dallas Page, Goldberg-Vicious, more Unofficial awards.

July 2000: Call It A Wrap, Jack! You've Done Your Share ... Go Home! Centerfold: Sid Vicious. Plus: Dusty Rhodes, Disco Inferno, DDP, Dudleys-Hardys.

September 2000: Wrestle McMania! Why The Peace Can't Last. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Eric Bischoff, Dudleys, Raven.

December 2000: Head Hog! Does Undertaker Have Enough Gas In His Tank To Rumble To The Top? Centerfold: Dallas Page. Plus: Kurt Angle, Rikishi, Vampiro-Sting, Japan.

FULL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH HOLIDAY 2000

January 2001: Who Does He Really Hate? Someone Will Pay For Austin's Pain! Plus: Steven Richards, Justin Credible, Gordon Solie, Jeff Jarrett, Arn-Sid.

March 2001: Hulk Hogan: WWF Fans Want Him Back! Plus: Mike Awesome, Rikishi, Jerry Lynn, Elix Skipper, Triple-H.

May 2001: The WrestleMania Curse! Will The Great One Ever Win The Big One? Plus: Vince McMahon, William Regal, Page & Nash, Ivory, Lance Storm, ECW.

June 2001 (116 Pages): The PWI Poll. Plus: Ric Flair, Chyna, Steve Austin.

July 2001: Women's Work! It Ain't What It Used To Be! Plus: Dudleys, Chavo Guerrero Jr., Justin Credible, Francine, Scott Steiner.

September 2001: WWF-WCW: The 10 Questions That Must Be Answered. Plus: Triple-H, Stacy Keibler, Paul Heyman, Matt Hardy.

October 2001 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Perry Saturn, Dallas Page, Terri.

March 2002: No More Joking, No More Choking: Y2J Takes A Serious Stab At Superstardom! Plus: Test, The Rock, Eric Bischoff, Bradshaw, Foley vs. Regal.

May 2002: The Mania To End All Manias! What Will Wrestling Look Like By WrestleMania X-9? Plus: Trish Stratus, RVD, Russ Haas, Big Bossman, WWF comedy.

July 2002: Steph Infection! How Can Triple-H Keep His Mind On His Game? Plus: Goldust-Terri, NWO, Ron Waterman, Spike & Tazz, Jazz.

August 2002 (116 Pages): Supercards 2002: WrestleManiaX8, WWA Revolution, Super 8. Plus: X-Pac, Steve Corino, Ric Flair.

September 2002: No Rock ... No Problem: The WWF Can Thrive Without The Great One. Plus: WWF draft, Billy Kidman, Sean O'Haire, Stanley Weston.

October 2002 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Lou Thesz, Francine, Edge.

January 2003: Brock Aftershock: How Lesnar Changed The Future Of WWE. Plus: Chris Benoit, Low-Ki, Jericho-Flair, Rey Misterio Jr., SummerSlam at 15.

February 2003 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of Raw, Smackdown, independents, international, the business, the art.

March 2003: Rocky Horror! He Won't Forget What You Did Last Summer. Plus: Matt Hardy, Eddie Guerrero, Bass-WWE, Victoria, WWE's next wave.

June 2003 (116 Pages): The PWI Poll. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr.

August 2003 (116 Pages): Goldberg: He Has WWE Caught Between The Rock And A Hard Place! Plus: WrestleMania XIX, Shawn Michaels graduates, Paul London, Raven.

October 2004: Eugene, The Impossible Dream: When Will His Opponents Wake Up? Plus: Victoria, Edge, Dudleys, A.J. Styles, six-sided ring.

February 2005: A Yes Man? No Way! Ric Flair's Secret Plan Will Ruin Triple-H! Plus: Y2J, The Naturals, Luther Reigns, WrestleMania 21 countdown.

June 2005: Our Challenge To John Cena: Dominate 2005 ... Or We Don't Want To See You! Plus: Steve Austin, Austin Aries, Big Show, AMW.

August 2005: Kurt Angle: The 10 Reasons He's The Best Ever. Plus: Edge, Alex Shelley, Christy Hemme, DDP WWE Hall of Fame.

October 2005: Whole Lita Love: How Many Men Can One Woman Ruin? Plus: John Cena, C.M. Punk, McMahon-Bischoff-Paul E., A.J. Styles.

November 2005: PWI 500. Plus: Muhammed Hassan, Batista, RVD, Samoa Joe, Chris Jericho, PWI Tag Team Wish List.

February 2006: Losing Street Cred? The Time Is Now For Cena To Get Tough. Plus: Jerry Lawler, Eddie Guerrero, Austin-Hogan.

August 2006: Exclusive! Edge Comes Out Swinging! Plus: Brother Runt, Benoit & Lashley, Milano Collection AT.

December 2006: The Angry Young Man! C.M. Punk Leads The New ECW Revolution. Also: Triple-H, Christian, Batista.

February 2007: Hollywood Ending: Cena's Pumped For A Year Of Wrestling Only! Also: Randy Orton, Hardcore Holly, Booker-Batista, Kurt Angle.

Summer 2007: The Match Vince Let Get Away ... And The Title He Wouldn't! Also: Hogan-Big Show, Team 3D, WrestleMania 23 weekend, ECW.

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KREW-CUTS

BY FRANK KREWDA

Photo by George Napolitano

Melina makes a perfectly fine babyface or heel. However, Frank Krewda says WWE is pushing her in neither direction at the moment, which makes little sense.

Bringing it all back home. For those of you who don't know, this column was the brainchild of Stu Saks. Back in the late-'90s, Stu felt the magazine needed a punchy, quick-hitting column that made people chuckle ... or even think about the wrestling business in a different way. Plus, he couldn't wait to parody my last name in print.

As much as I have enjoyed writing "Krew-Cuts," I have to admit that sometimes I've felt that it's strayed from its original spirit, so I'd like to return the old flavor with a little exercise I call, "Cool/Uncool" ...

Cool: King of the Ring; Uncool: Reality shows that dangle a WWE contract as the top prize, but give jobs to just about everybody that participates ... Cool: The Angry Miz Girl: Uncool: Alex Riley ... Cool: The bare-knuckle fighting "yob" Wade Barrett; Uncool: The sneering, arrogant Englishman Wade Barrett. Sorry, Wade, nobody does it better than Regal ... Cool: Juan Cena; Uncool: Cena returning as a ticket-holding fan. Does that mean I can jump the rail and attack Justin Gabriel, too? ... Cool: Small independent wrestling shows held in intimate venues in far-flung places. Uncool: Unreliable driving directions to small independent wrestling shows held in intimate venues in far-flung places. I like to get to them when I can, *if* I can ... Cool: Alberto Del Rio's Rolls-Royce entrance; Uncool: Ric Flair's wheelchair entrance; Cool: Randy Orton's punt kick and RKO; Uncool: Randy Orton's primping and preening ... Cool: Serena Deeb with a full head of hair; Uncool: Serena Deeb with a shaved head ... Cool: Paul Bearer back in WWE, Uncool: Yet another chapter in the Brothers of Destruction saga ... Cool: James Storm's beard; Uncool: John Morrison's beard. Keep trying, Little Shaver! ... Cool: SHIMMER and Women Superstars Uncensored; Uncool: Peep shows masquerading as professional wrestling ... Cool: Ring of Honor's ability to elevate new stars; Uncool: Ring of Honor's inability to retain its top stars ... Cool: Matt Morgan's growing push; Uncool: AJ Styles' inexplicable floundering ... Cool: Nexus; Uncool: Immortal ... Cool: Thursday Night *Impact*; Uncool: Monday Night *Impact* ... Cool: Daniel Bryan's understated confidence; Uncool: Miz' bloviating.

***

Tweener. No question, the line between heel and babyface—or good guy and bad guy—was erased a long time ago, but recent developments in WWE's Divas division have left Melina in something of a character vacuum, where fans don't know whether to cheer or boo the spicy Latina.

Shortly after Natalya won the Divas championship, Melina was granted a shot at the popular Canadian's title on *Raw*. Naturally, fans showed their support for the fan-friendly champion and mild disdain for Melina, the challenger. Actually, they showed more disdain for Michelle McCool and Layla, who joined the *Raw* broadcast team for commentary during the bout before attacking Nattie post-match.

The next week, Melina wrestled Natalya on some house shows in full heel mode, leading one to think she had left the fans behind her for good and embraced the "dark side." But the following week on *Raw,* Melina was positioned as part of the contingent that surrounded LayCool in the ring, and spent the first several moments of the match going toe-to-toe with McCool, the quintessential villainess in the Divas battle royal to determine who would win the Slammy for Diva of the Year.

So, do we cheer Melina or boo her? WWE had better make up its mind. Because whether she's breaking down in tears after winning the Divas title or taking down McCool, Melina is a super-talented character WWE fans want to embrace one way or the other. Having her sit on the fence is a waste of her skills.

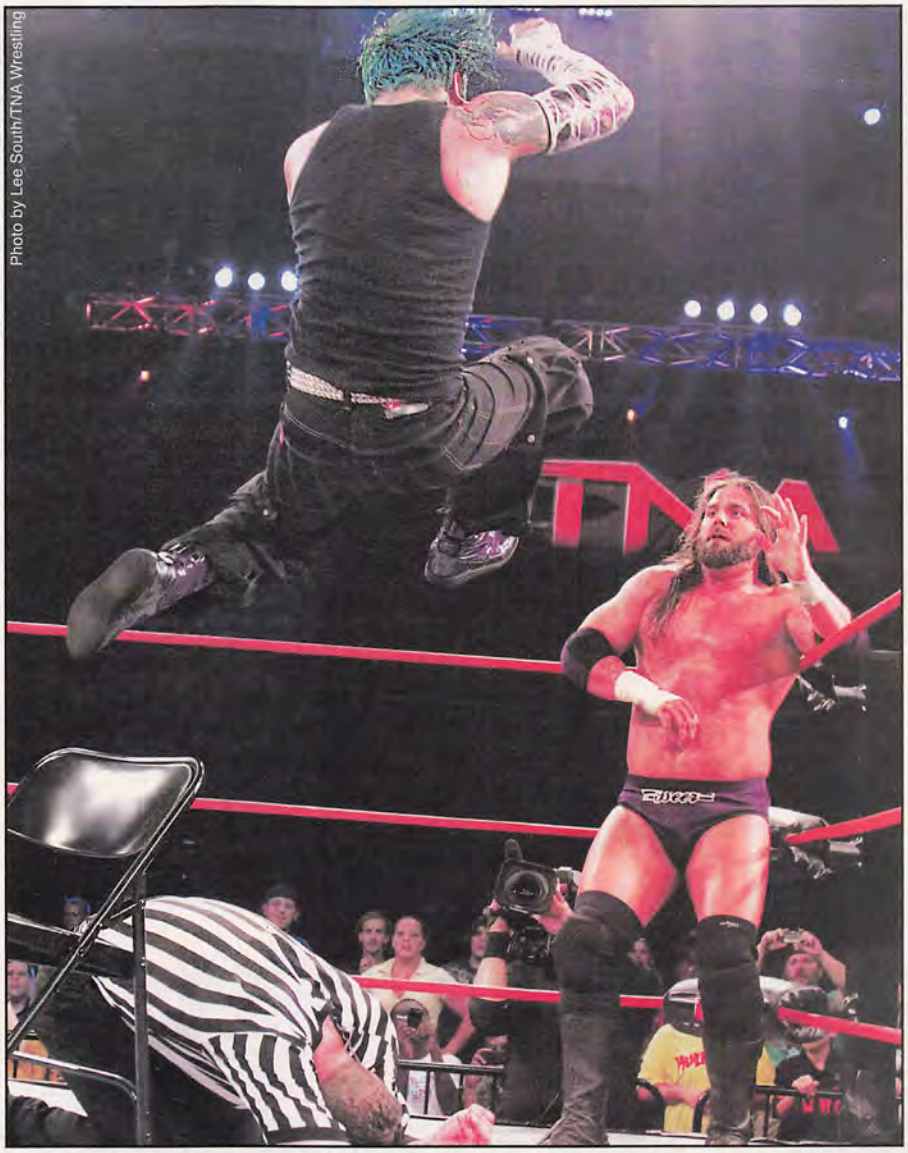


Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Jeff Hardy is a natural risk-taker, but, Krewda notes, it is TNA that just might be taking the biggest risk by keeping him as champion.

Right Man for the Job?. I am really beginning to wonder about TNA's decision to keep the World title around Jeff Hardy's waist.

Yes, he is an exciting and talented wrestler with legions of fans. However, given his personal issues, keeping Hardy as the World champ just doesn't seem like a wise idea—even if TNA sunk a reported $18,000 into creating Hardy's new "Immortal" championship belt.

At a time when its chief rival is doing all it can to promote a clean image, it makes little sense that TNA would have somebody with a history of drug problems—much less pending legal issues—standing in as the flag-bearer of the company.

It also stands to reason that TNA would be able to attract more deep-pocketed sponsors a la WWE if its most visible wrestler, which Hardy as champion is, weren't facing possible jail time. Indeed, more corporate funding would help TNA overcome the current cash crunch that forced it to cancel two Indiana house shows in November.

Should Hardy be convicted of the drug charges, he'd be forced to vacate the title, which would be yet another significant blow to the company's credibility, especially coming off a scenario in which Rob Van Dam, another popular champion, was forced to give up the belt due to a scheduling/contract snafu. The last thing TNA needs as it attempts to build its rating back up on Thursday nights is broken continuity.

I don't know if recent rumors of Hardy showing up for shows in less-than-fit working condition are true or not, but a champion, I've always been told, is somebody that can be trusted to always put the company's best foot forward. Right now, I'm not so sure Jeff is TNA's ideal choice. □

INDEPENDENT ROUNDUP

By AL ALVEN

WHEN EVOLVE Wrestling debuted in early-2010, the promotion set itself apart by promising to keep strict track of win-loss records and issue title shots based on those records. Though titles had yet to be established at press time, the system has created some intriguing scenarios. Through the sixth and final show of 2010, there was a three-way tie for the EVOLVE wins leader among **Jimmy Jacobs**, **Chuck Taylor**, and **Johnny Gargano**, all boasting 4-2 records.

Technically, **Drake Younger** held the best record at 3-1. All four men have a legitimate claim to the number-one ranking, and EVOLVE officials are presently meeting to discuss a solution.

"It's a no-brainer, I should be recognized as the best in EVOLVE," said Jacobs. "Look at my body of work. I've beaten Gargano, **Ken Doane**, a former WWE guy, and **Brad Allen** and **Adam Cole**, two of the top prospects in wrestling. The decision is so easy, but sometimes the truth hurts."

Of course, Jacobs failed to mention that he also suffered a submission loss to Gargano, as well as a pinfall defeat at the hands of Taylor.

As 2010 ended, **Up In Smoke** (**Cheech** and **Cloudy**) had the best record in the tag team division at 4-0; **Chikara Sekigun** (**Mike Quackenbush**, **Jigsaw**, and **Hallowicked**) were in second place at 2-0.

On November 29, **BxB Hulk** celebrated one full year as Dragon Gate USA's Open the Freedom Gate champion. The charismatic high-flyer won the title in a four-way elimination match against **CIMA**, **YAMOTO**, and **Gran Akuma**. Since then, he has held a vice grip on the belt, scoring successful defenses against the likes of **Dragon Kid**, **Naruki Doi**,

Photo by Dan McMillan

As 2010 closed, Drake Younger had the best record among all EVOLVE competitors. Younger, Jimmy Jacobs, Chuck Taylor, and Johnny Gargano are the frontrunners to become the first EVOLVE heavyweight champion.

Masato Yoshino, **Masaaki Mochizuki**, and **Shingo**.

A new top challenger for Hulk is being determined. One intriguing possibility is former Ring of Honor champion **Homicide**, who debuted in October with a win over **Rich Swann**. Another former ROH titleholder, **Austin Aries**, has been signed for future events and is said to be infatuated with the idea of becoming the first man to hold titles in both promotions.

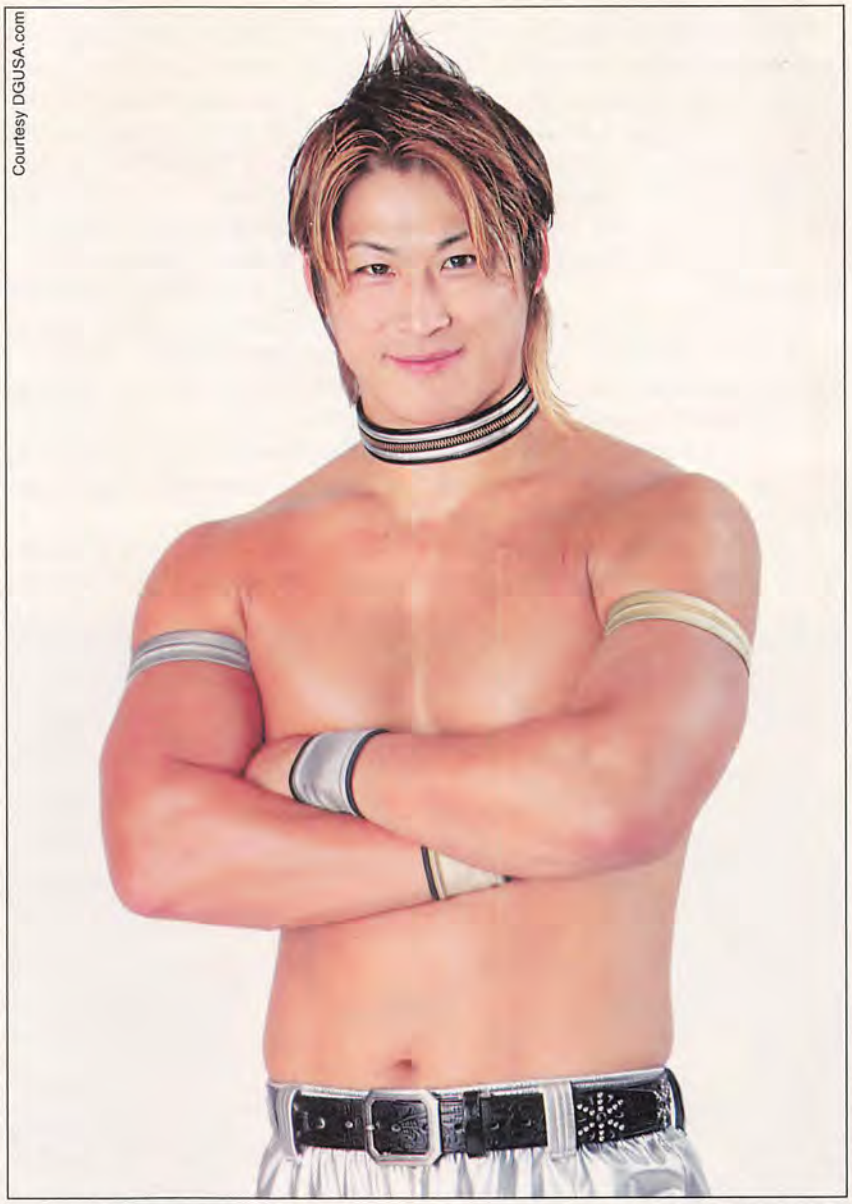
In other news, the company received some much-appreciated positive press courtesy of WWE's **Daniel Bryan** recently. Via Twitter, Bryan announced a list of his favorite matches of 2010. At the very top was his submission win over Shingo at the Enter the Dragon event in late-July.

Back to Homicide for a sec: The outspoken "Notorious 187" lamented to *Slam! Wrestling* the displeasure he felt during his final days with TNA. He claimed to be a victim of politics, but also said that he has been re-energized by his full-time return to the independents.

Meanwhile, **Davey Richards**, who will have received his shot at ROH champion and former tag team partner **Roderick Strong** at Final Battle 2010 after this issue went to press, was on tour with New Japan Pro Wrestling and had IWGP junior heavyweight champion **Prince Devitt** in his sights.

"I am a born champion and at the start of 2011 I will hold gold in both Japan and the USA," he told rohwrestling.com. "My ultimate goal in life is to win the [ROH championship] and I know I will be successful."

Also enjoying a successful tour of Japan are ROH tag team champions **Chris Hero** and **Claudio Castagnoli**, competing for Pro Wrestling NOAH. **The Kings of Wrestling** scored one of the biggest victories of their careers when they beat Global Honored Crown heavyweight champion **Takashi Sugiura** and **Akitoshi Saito** on November 27.



Courtesy DGUSA.com

B&B Hulk has a lot to smile about. Not only did he move up 243 spots in this year's "*PWI* 500" to finish at 98, but he passed the one-year mark as Dragon Gate USA's Open the Freedom Gate champion.

Meanwhile, **Colt Cabana** continues to be frustrated in his attempts to bring "honor" back to ROH. After months of feuding violently with **Steve Corino** and **Kevin Steen**, Cabana is intent on putting the bloodshed behind him and returning to his technical roots.

A recent bout against **Rhett Titus** started out as a hold-for-hold exhibition, but Titus wound up winning by questionable means. ROH officials have agreed to work with Cabana on his request to wrestle clean matches against pure scientific wrestlers.

Christopher Daniels ended **Eddie Edwards'** nine-month reign as ROH TV champion with a December 10 win in Louisville, Kentucky.

Dan Maff's amazing reign as Jersey All Pro Wrestling heavyweight champion came to an end at a record 511 days. Maff dropped the title to **Brodie Lee** in a Championship Scramble match at November to Remember in a match that also included **Nick Gage** and **Azrieal**.

Earlier in the evening, Lee successfully defended his JAPW New Jersey State title against **Eddie Kingston**. Having also previously reigned as one-half of the the JAPW tag team champions with **Necro Butcher**, the 6'7" bruiser has now held the company's top three titles.

While many expected Maff to seek an immediate rematch, it seems that he and **Monsta Mack** have reformed **Da Hit Squad** and will soon be challenging **Sami Callihan** and **Chris Dickinson** for their JAPW tag team title instead.

On the subject of record title reigns, the storied NWA tag team championships are no longer in the grasp of the **Skullkrushers**, **Rasche Brown** and **Keith Walker**. After 777 days, the belts fell to the **Dark City Fight Club** of **Jon Davis** and **Kory Chavis**. The title change occurred at a Pro Wrestling Krush show in Milwaukee on November 20. It will take Davis and Chavis more than two years just to equal their predecessors' feat.

The DCFC is also the reigning Full Impact Pro tag team champions in Florida, and remain top contenders for the ROH tag straps as well.

Shelton Benjamin and **Charlie Haas**—formerly known as "**The World's Greatest Tag Team**" in WWE—now wish to be referred to as "**Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team**." (They can beat just about anybody in the ring, but they will never challenge WWE's copyright attorneys!)

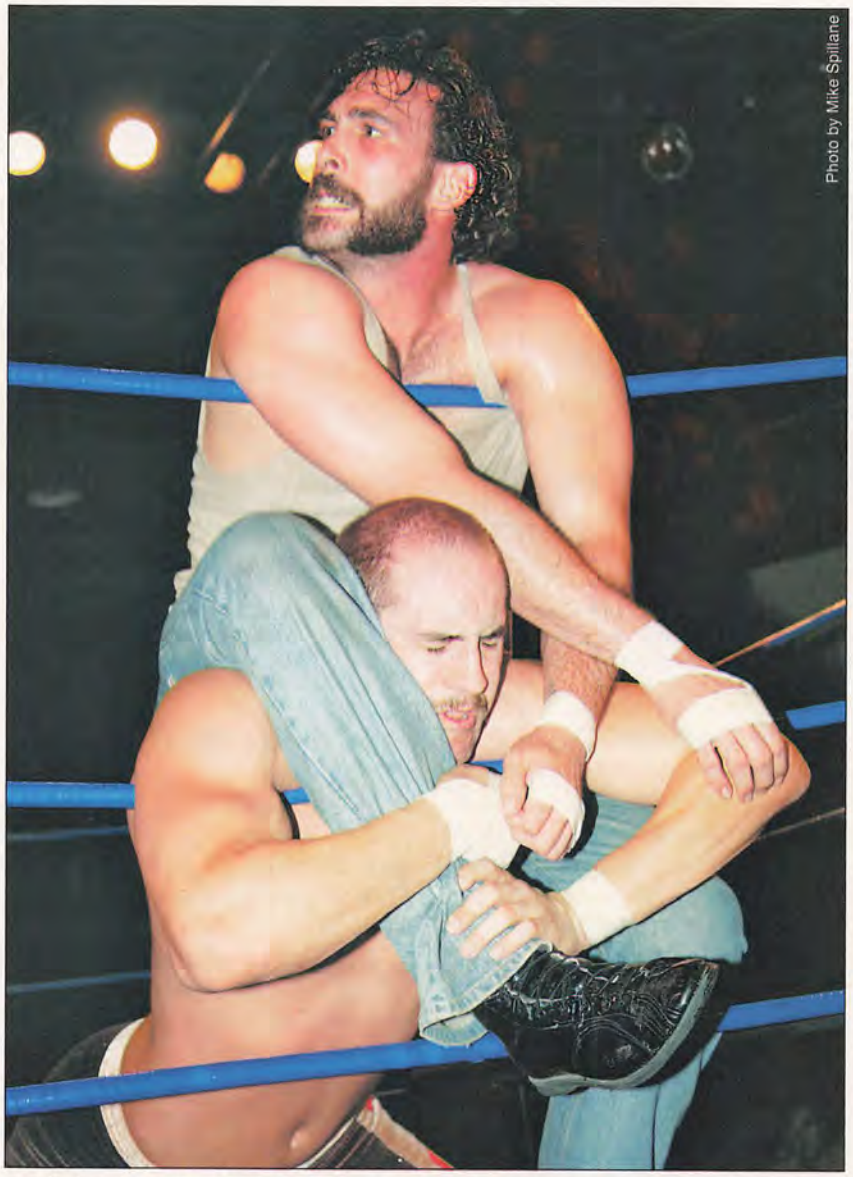


Photo by Mike Spillane

Brodie Lee (wrestling Claudio Castagnoli in CHIKARA) ended Dan Maff's 511-day reign as Jersey All Pro Wresttling heavyweight champion.

Benjamin and Haas have been looking to rebound from their non-title loss to the Kings of Wrestling at ROH's Glory by Honor IX. They scored two big wins while competing for American Wrestling Rampage in November, beating **La Resistance** (**Rene Dupree** and **Sylvan Grenier**) and **Booker T** and **Scott Steiner**.

Matt Hyson, much better known in ECW and WWE as **Spike Dudley** and in TNA as **Brother Runt**, has decided to call it a career. A former ECW and WWE tag team, WWE cruiserweight, European, and eight-time Hardcore champion, Hyson leaves the industry at age 40.

He wrestled his final match on September 11, a loss to **Shane Williams** at Real Action Wrestling's September 2 Remember in St. Albans, Vermont.

One of the more prominent promotions in the Northeast, New England Championship Wrestling, has officially folded. The announcement was made by owner **Sheldon Goldberg** on November 6, following the company's Toxic Waltz event.

NECW was founded in 2000. Over the years, many future stars competed for the company, including **John Cena**, **Kofi Kingston**, and Ken Doane.

Reportedly, several NECW wrestlers have been recruited to compete for a revamped PWF New England, which had merged with NECW back in 2006.

Martin Stanley Fuqua is running wild and abusing his power as the new owner of Ground Xero Wrestling.

After **Mitch A. Palooza** defeated **Deimos** in a tournament final of the first-ever Fuqua Invitational to win a title shot anytime

within the next year, he was brutally attacked by Fuqua and his entire **Fuqua Enterprises** stable. Afterward, Fuqua simply stated that Palooza "was not his choice to win."

Earlier in the evening, Fuqua stripped GXW tag team champions **The Holy Union** of their belts, similarly proclaiming that they didn't deserve to be "his" champions. A full-scale revolution appears to be in the works, but with Fuqua in charge, fans are left to ponder what can be done.

Close to 150 indy wrestlers, fans, and aspiring reality TV stars have applied to be contestants on WWE's revived *Tough Enough* program. The casting call ends on January 22, and around that time we may learn when the show will be slated to air.

In the meantime, WWE surprised many by continuing the *NXT* experiment. Season Four kicked off in early-December, with six male wrestlers from the roster of Florida Championship Wrestling competing: **Brodus Clay**, **Byron Saxton**, **Conor O'Brian**, **Derrick Bateman**, **Jacob Novak**, and **Johnny Curtis**.

Season Two competitors **Percy Watson**, **Lucky Cannon**, **Eli Cottonwood**, and **Titus O'Neil**, along with Season Three Diva hopefuls **Naomi Night**, **AJ Lee**, **Aksana**, and **Maxine** all continue to be utilized in FCW.

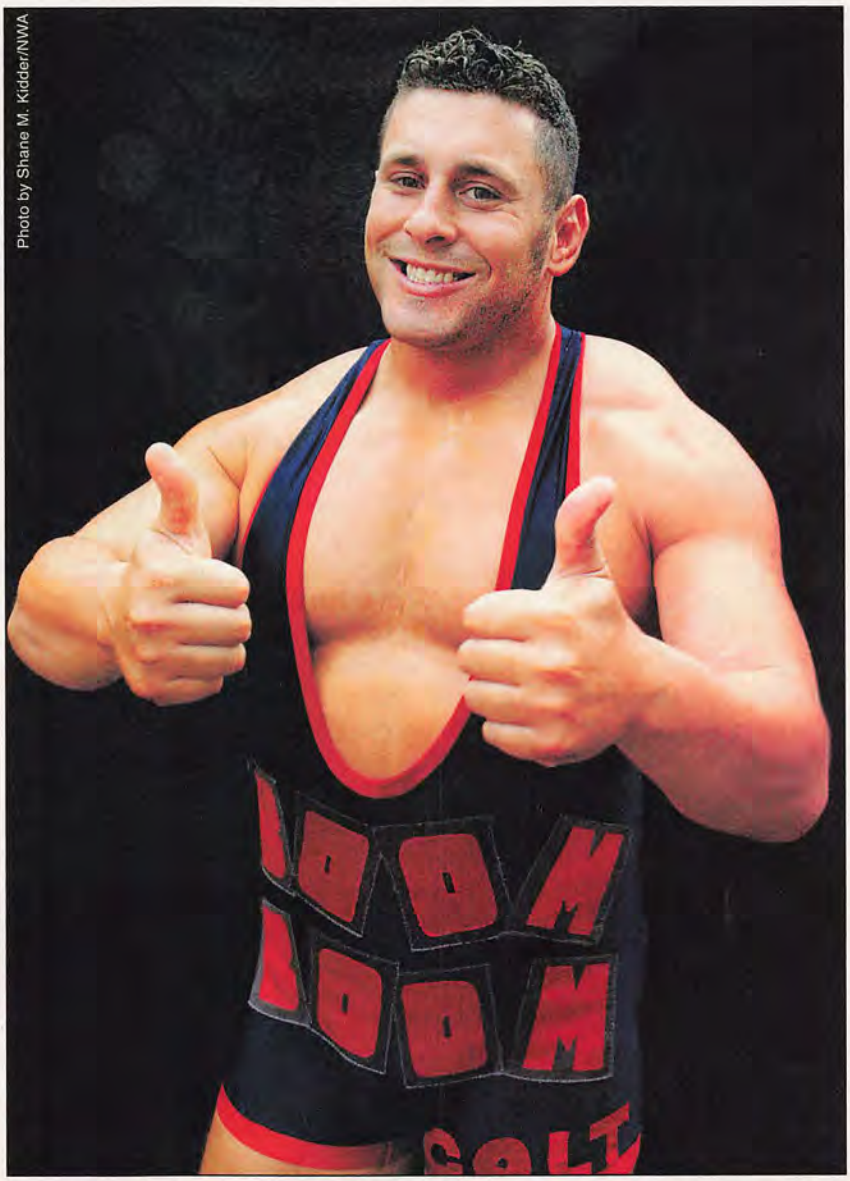


Photo by Shane M. Kidder/NWA

Colt Cabana's attempt to bring sportsmanship back to wrestling by taking on only scientific opponents is being given serious consideration by Ring of Honor brass.

Recent Title Changes

Purley Obsessed Wrestling World, Villa Park, IL, November 13: **Kanoa** beat **Dinamite**, **Chris Cairo**, and **Rex Hart** for the POWW title ... **Trevor Blanchard** & **Black Iron** defeated **Demolition** to win the tag team title ... **Eric Freedom** beat **Blanchard** and **Scott Spade** to become the new POWW Regional champion ... **1st Class Wrestling, West Carrollton, OH, November 20:** **Gee Gee** won the 1CW National championship from **Tom McClaine** ... **Nate Wings** beat **Sgt. J-Roc** for the 1CW TV title ... **IWF Wrestling, West Paterson, NJ, November 20:** **Flex Freeman** beat **Aaron Stride** for the IWF American title ... **The Mastadon Franciz** won the IWF heavyweight belt from **Latin Lover Chachi** ... **Big Time Wrestling, Derry, NH, November 21:** **A.J. Mitrano** beat **Flex Armstrong** for the BTW TV title ... **San Antonio-Texas Wrestling Association, San Antonio, TX, November 26:** **Big Dogg** pinned **Vince Vile** in a tournament final to become the first TWA North American Champion ... **Absolute Intense Wrestling, Lakewood, OH, November 27:** **Marion Fontaine** beat **Shiima Xion** to win the AIW Intense title ... **SPW Wrestling, Virginia Beach, VA, November 27:** **Ryan Nuzzi** defeated **Mark Anthony** via submission to win the SPW title ... **SoCal Pro Wrestling, Oceanside, CA, December 4:** **Todd Chandler** & **Kid Caramba** beat SoCal tag team champions **The Ballard Brothers** (**Shane** & **Shannon**), and **2 Skinny White Guys** (**Peter Avalon** & **Nick Lovin**) to win the title ... **Old School Championship Wrestling, Mt. Pleasant, SC, December 5:** **Cali Casanova** pinned **Matt Crosby** to win the Hardcore King title. □

THE INTERNATIONAL REPORT

BY BILL MELTZER

FOLLOWING HIS SELF-requested release from WWE, **MVP** began preliminary negotiations to embark on a tour of New Japan and possibly make the rounds in other notable Japanese promotions as well.

One potential opponent of interest to MVP is legendary veteran **Masahiro Chono**, who a few months ago was given permission by New Japan to accept bookings from other Japanese promotions, making him a big-name free agent. While nothing is imminent, MVP has stated that touring Japan on his own terms—rather than under the WWE umbrella—has been an idea he has been turning over in his mind for several years.

EMLL has ramped up its ongoing storyline that has the villainous **Los Invaders** attempting to overrun the promotion, a la the New World Order in WCW, Nexus in WWE, and similar factions in TNA.

Most recently, **Victor "Latino" Resindez** (formerly **The Latin Lover**) agreed to join the army of EMLL stars involved in the fight. At the televised request of EMLL Managing Director **Juan Manuel Mar**, the former heel accepted the offer, but cautioned that he expects to get paid for destroying **Hector Garza**.

WWE star **The Great Khali** faces a host of prospective lawsuits in his native India for allegedly breaching a contractual obligation to promote a new Bollywood film, *Ramaa: The Saviour*, while he was participating in an Indian reality TV program called *The Big Boss*. The movie's producer claims that Khali was paid up front all monies for starring in and promoting the movie, but skipped out in his promotional duties. Khali, who reportedly also made 10 times the weekly and upfront salary the rest of the cast members received, prolonged his stay on the show by several weeks from his originally planned 10- to 12-day stay. His appearance on the show has been widely panned by Indian critics.

Down in Puerto Rico, two World Wrestling Council championships changed hands at the Crossfire show on November 27.

In the co-main event, **"The Precious One" Gilbert** defeated **El Sensacional Carlitos** to become the WWC Puerto Rican champion. Then, two former WWE adversaries battled for the WWC Universal championship, with **Carlito Colon** besting **Shelton Benjamin** to win the title.

In an attempt to build interest in his independent group, **Smash**, which had been getting solid reviews from Japanese indy fans, **Yoshihiro Tajiri** has brought in 77-year-old **Gypsy Joe**, who wrestled in All Japan during the

Photo by Stu Saks

Disappointed with his career in WWE, MVP sought and obtained his release. Now it seems MVP has his sights set on wrestling in Japan in an independent capacity. Some are predicting a feud with fellow Japanese indy star, Masa Chono.

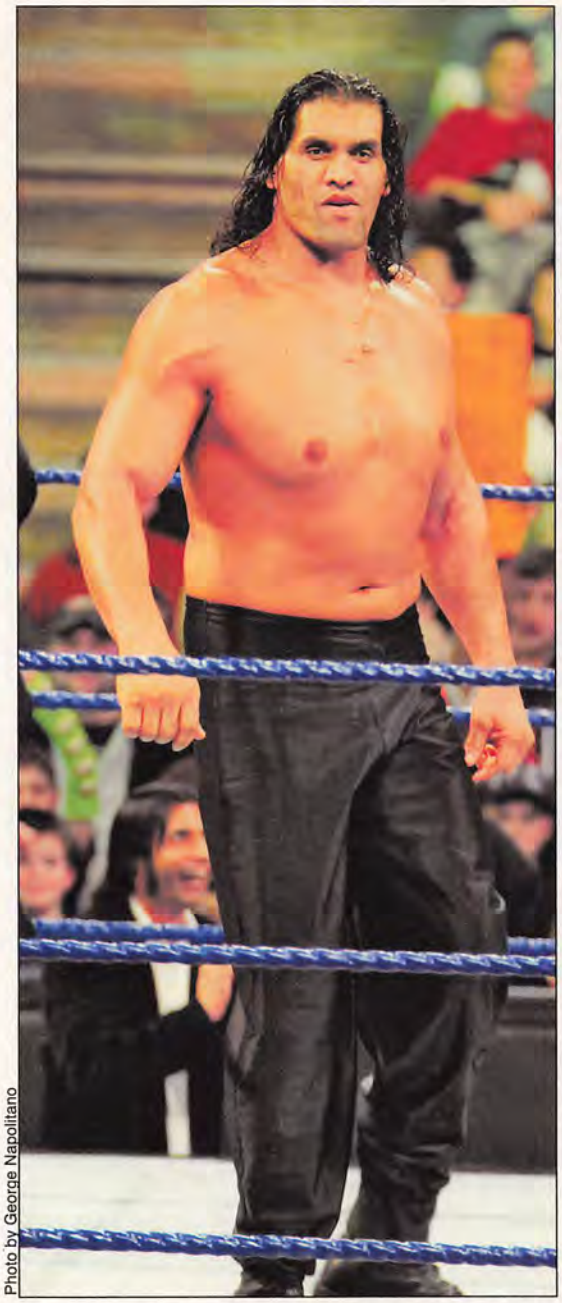


Photo by George Napolitano

The Great Khali hasn't had much success in the U.S. of late nor in his native India, where he's performance in a reality show has been panned. Worse, Khali could face a mess of lawsuits for allegedly failing to do some promotional work.

1970s. The idea is to bill Joe as the oldest man to wrestle in Japan, and also build appeal among older fans that remember his last swing on the puroresu scene.

Another familiar face returning to Japanese wrestling is **Hiroyoshi Tenzan**, who'd missed more than a year of action due to shoulder and neck injuries. Sporting a new look that features a short "rookie" haircut to signify his career rebirth, Tenzan defeated **Antonio Honda** on a small independent card in late-November.

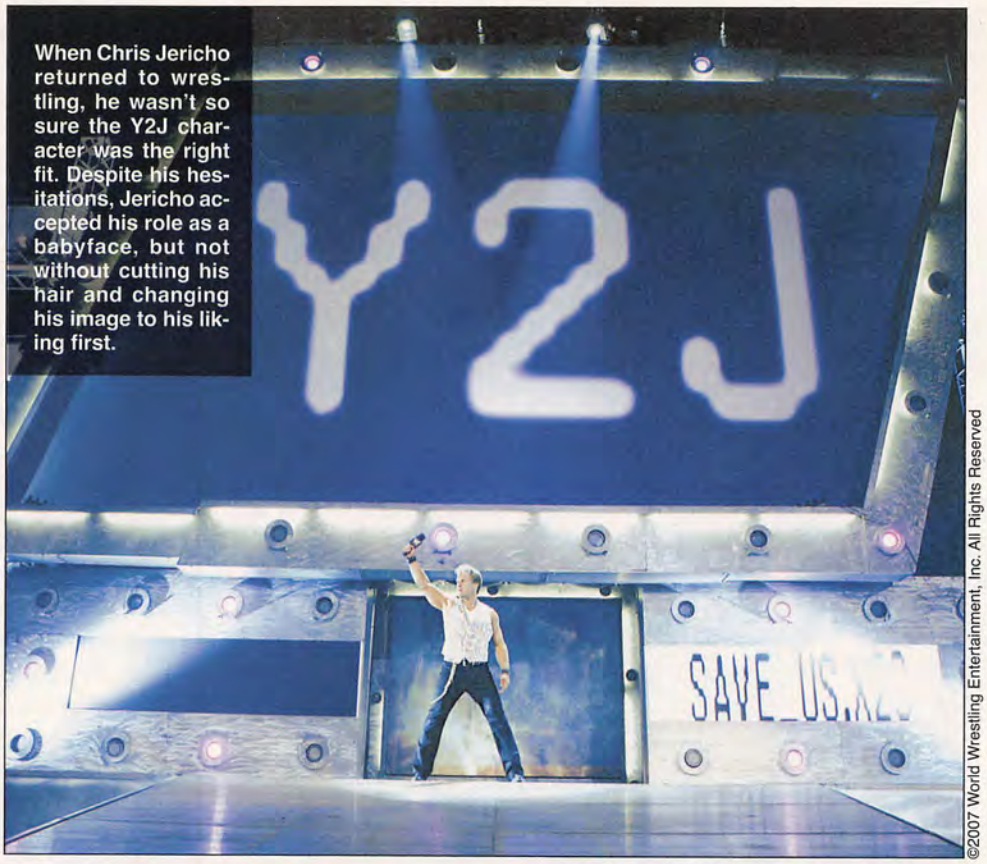
The international wrestling community is mourning the recent deaths of a host of notable figures from the puroresu, lucha libre, and European wrestling scenes: **Kantaro Hishino**, **Yoshikami "Gran Naniwa" Kimura**, **El Hijo de Cien Caras** (**Son of Cien Caras**), and Canadian wrestler **Jack Laskin**. Our sincere condolences go out to their friends and families.

Hoshino, 67, who had been in poor health since suffering a stroke, passed away after contracting pneumonia and lapsing to a coma. An active wrestler for 35 years, Hoshino was one of New Japan's more notable junior heavyweight wrestlers from the 1960s to the early-1980s. He was inducted into the New Japan Hall of Fame in 2007. Itoshino was best known among Western fans as the tag team partner of the original **Tiger Mask** (**Satoru Sayama**) in the early-1980s, teaming up against various combinations of top foreign junior heavyweights touring Japan, including **The Dynamite Kid**, **Mark "Black Tiger" Rocco**, **Bret Hart**, and **Steve Wright**.

Kimura, 33, passed away as a result of heart failure. Best known as the protégé of the legendary **Gran Hamada**, he made his pro debut at the tender age of 17. Although he was a proficient technical wrestler, he developed a largely comedic persona. The highlight of his career was his participation in the 1995 Super J-Cup tournament, where he reached the quarterfinals. He competed against the likes of **Chris Jericho**, **Chris Benoit**, **Jushin "Thunder" Liger**, and **Ultimo Dragon**. Under the Gran Naniwa ring name, he competed mainly for Michinoku Pro, but also made appearances in New Japan, All Japan, and Okinawa Pro as a junior heavyweight. He also had a brief run in the original ECW during a U.S. tour in 1998.

The masked Hijo de Cien Caras, 33, was a victim of the ongoing wave of violence in Mexico. He and a female companion were found dead in his Honda CRV in Mexico City, both shot from close range in the head and neck. Born Ignacio Jimenez Ibarra, he was the real-life brother of **L.A. Park** (known previously as **La Parka**), nephew of **Super Parka**, and cousin of **Volador Jr.**, all major lucha libre stars. Although singles titles eluded him, the masked man had success in the tag team scene, twice winning the IWRG tag team title.

Laskin, 81, passed away after a long illness. A native of Hamilton, Ontario, he enjoyed moderate success as a light heavyweight in the 1950s in his home country and the U.S. He competed under a variety of ring names, most notably as **Abe Levinsky**. His most sustained period of success came from1956 to 1959, when he continuously toured Europe, working as a semi-headliner in Austria, as well as wrestling in England, France, Belgium, and Spain. Laskin retired from the ring in 1962. Known for his sharp sense of humor and devout Judaism, Laskin worked in a variety of businesses after leaving wrestling but found his greatest personal rewards as a Jewish chaplain, volunteering his time to visit prisons and work with impoverished families of all faiths. □



When Chris Jericho returned to wrestling, he wasn't so sure the Y2J character was the right fit. Despite his hesitations, Jericho accepted his role as a babyface, but not without cutting his hair and changing his image to his liking first.

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CHRIS JERICHO

WHEN CHRIS JERICHO'S WWE contract expired last fall and WWE could not come to terms on a new deal with him, the wrestling world lost more than one of its best competitors. It lost a true performer in every sense of the word.

Perhaps more than any other wrestler in recent history, Chris Jericho saw wrestling as an art form, and treated it as such. His pallet: a rich wrestling career that spanned multiple countries and two decades. Drawing upon the countless experiences he's had over those years, Jericho has time and again created masterpieces of wrestling storytelling.

And it's no surprise that Jericho would see wrestling as art. The Winnipeg, Manitoba, native is not only a successful wrestler, but also a successful musician (as the front man of the heavy metal band Fozzy), a successful film actor (with movie credits that include ***MacGruber****, a successful TV star (having hosted shows including ABC's* ***Downfall****) and a successful author (whose second autobiography,* **Undisputed***, was due in book shelves in February).*

But it remains unclear whether Jericho will ever be a wrestler again. It's not the first time Jericho has stepped away from the sport to pursue other interests. In 2005, he took a two-year hiatus from the ring. Some wondered then if his passion for wrestling would ever return. But, priding himself on never doing anything halfway, Jericho came back in 2007 and went on to do what many—including Jericho himself—consider the best work of his career.

In this extensive interview with PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED*, Senior Writer Al Castle, Jericho reflected on what may have been the last, and best, chapter of his career, including his reinvention as a despicable villain, his memorable rivalries with Shawn Michaels and Rey Mysterio Jr., wrestling one of his childhood heroes, and how he wants to be remembered.*

AL CASTLE: Can you talk a bit about what your status is right now with WWE? We obviously haven't seen you there for a few months, but there have been some indications that you might look forward to working there again.

CHRIS JERICHO: As simply as you can put it, my contract ran out and I've moved on. That's basically it. People are always looking for dirt and ask, "When are you coming back?" and "What happened?" and whatever. My contract ended and I decided to continue on in my life. That's basically, in a nutshell, the answer to give you. I'm not working with WWE. I loved the work I was doing. I think it was some of the best of my career. But I never intended to re-sign again after coming back for that three-year period. And that three-year period ran out and there are other things going on. That's basically it. There's no hidden agenda. No hidden secret. People are waiting for the other shoe to drop, and there really isn't another shoe to drop. I did the job I was signed up to do, and that's it.

"IF I NEVER WRESTLE ANOTHER DAY, I WOULDN'T FEEL BAD ABOUT THE FACT THAT I NEVER GOT MY LAST APPLAUSE AND GOT TO RIDE OFF INTO THE SUNSET. I'M A BAD GUY."

CASTLE: So do you see your wrestling career in the past tense now? Do you think you've wrestled your last match?

JERICHO: Who knows? I've never judged my life that way, in terms of, "I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that." I've always kind of gone with my heart. As of right now I don't see myself returning to WWE anytime soon. That's not to say that I'll never return, but I have no plans, no schedule, no time line for it. Every fan that I see is like, "Hey, when are you coming back? What's going on? What are you doing?" And I've never really thought that far ahead. As far as I know right now, I don't have any plans to come back anytime in the near future. Sorry if that disappoints anybody! (*laughs*)

CASTLE: For WWE, the timing is not ideal because it comes at the same time that they've lost so much other talent. Shawn Michaels and Batista both left several months ago. The Undertaker is on the shelf. Triple-H is on the shelf. And so I could see them taking your loss worse than if it came at another time. Did that put any pressure on you when your contract was coming up?

JERICHO: No. It may sound selfish, but that's really none of my concern. That's how it works, man … I don't have any obligation to the company to stay because they don't have anybody else. That's their responsibility. That's their issue. And I think it's better for them if they lose a lot of top guys because then they don't rely on the same thing over and over again. They're forced to make changes. They're forced to use new guys. They're forced to move forward, which is something they could have done a couple of years ago, but they really didn't. So now they have no choice. The business will be fine without Chris Jericho. It was fine when Shawn Michaels left. It was fine when Bret Hart left. Guys move on. That's how it works.

EVERY ISSUE, REPORTERS FROM PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED WILL PARTICIPATE IN AN INCISIVE PRESS CONFERENCE WITH A TOP WRESTLING STAR. THE QUESTIONS WILL BE DEMANDING. AND THE ANSWERS WILL REVEAL THE INNERMOST THOUGHTS OF THE GIANTS OF THE SPORTS

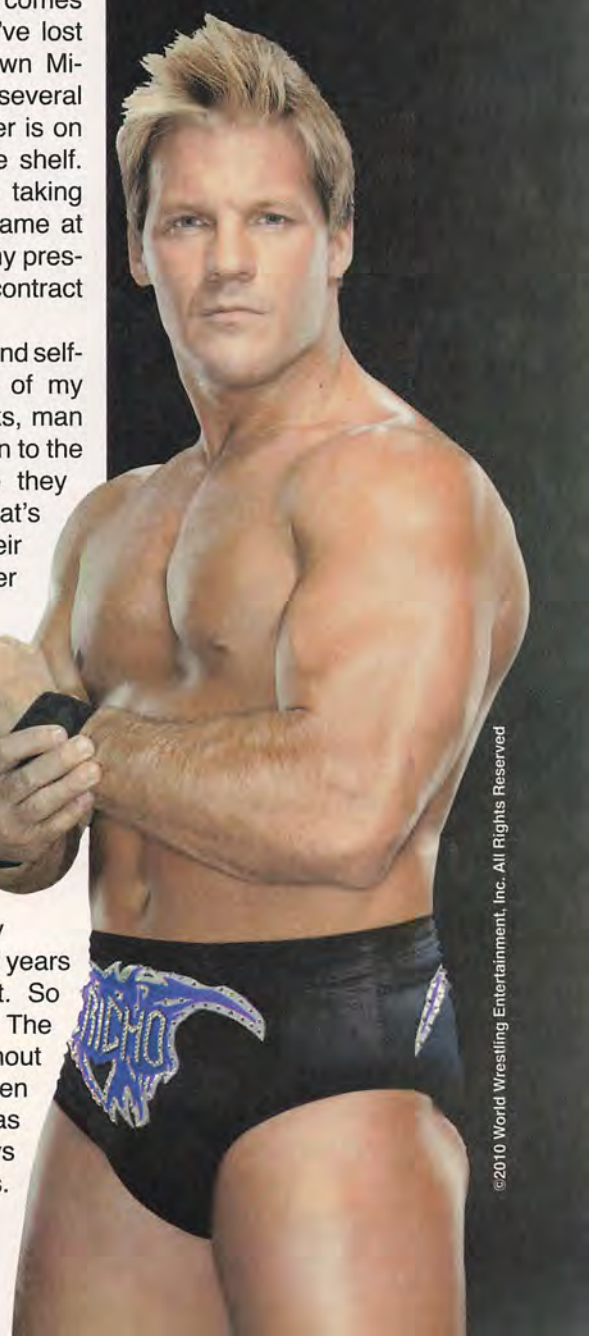

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Photo by George Napolitano

With a stern look on his face and dressed in a sharp suit, Y2J quickly vanished to reveal what Chris Jericho had always wanted from his return, to be the most hated man in the business.

You can't stay there forever. Not everybody's going to be a Ric Flair type of guy or a Hogan type of guy that stays there for years and years and years. I know I'm not. I never planned to be. So if leaving put the company in a lurch, it won't be in a lurch for long.

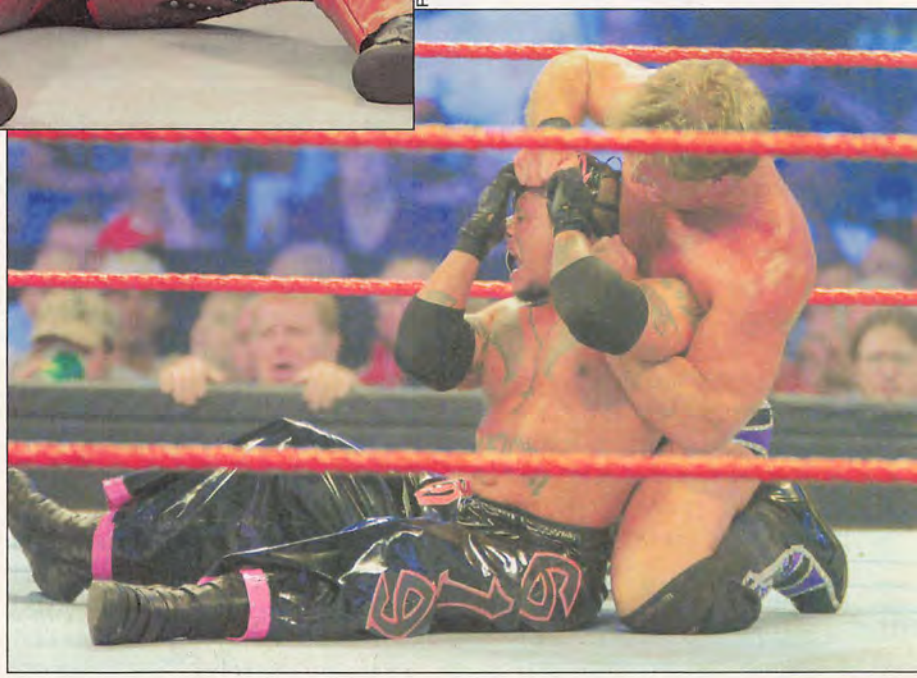
That's the bad thing about the business nowadays. Before there were always lots of guys in other countries, and guys climbing up the ranks, and guys that had experience who weren't with WWE. Now the way that it works is that all your guys are in WWE, and that's it. And a lot of those guys don't have a lot of experience, so they're forced to take a chance on guys who they might not have taken a chance on before.

CASTLE: They have a lot of stars and attractions and they've done a good job of bringing guys up. But when you think of who is going to deliver that five-star match at WrestleMania and really bring home the wrestling, I don't see that many guys there who could. There are a lot of good wrestlers, and even very good wrestlers, but maybe not that many great wrestlers. Do you agree with that?

JERICHO: Well, the one thing you can't teach is experience. And that's what made the great wrestlers great. If you look at all the guys over the years that were able to churn out great matches over and over again, they were guys that had years of experience under their belts to be able to do that. They knew a lot of different styles, and had life experiences, and lots of different matches they could draw upon to create great matches. Unfortunately, you might never have those guys again because times have changed. Now you have guys who have five, six, seven, eight years experience working at the top of the top, whereas before you had guys who had 15 years experience or 20 years experience. It's one of those things where the whole game has changed now and the curve may have to drop. And what used to be a three-star match five years ago just may end up being the five-star match of the future. You just don't have guys with that experience and it's not built that way anymore. It's kind of sad in a lot of ways.

CASTLE: I want to talk a little bit about your last few years in WWE before your most recent departure. You took a two-year break from the business and pursued some other ventures. And when you came back there was some speculation about, "Well maybe his heart is not in it as much as before. He wants to do these other things—write books

Photos by George Napolitano



Jericho was involved in two of the hottest angles of the past three years: first, his extremely personal feud with Shawn Michaels (above) was *PWI's* Feud of the Year in 2009 and then an extended program with Rey Mysterio (right) that saw Jericho attempt to steal Rey's mask.

and act and perform with his band." And then you went on to have what I think a lot of people thought was the three best years of your career, completely reinventing yourself.

JERICHO: I stepped away from wrestling because my heart wasn't in it. That's exactly it. You hit the nail on the head. I didn't come back with my heart not in it. I came back 100,000 percent committed. That's *why* I came back. And that's why it took me 27 months to come back. I wasn't messing around when I said I wasn't going to come back unless I felt I could be better than ever. And that's what I did. The last three years of my career were the three best of my career, as far as I'm concerned.

CASTLE: When you finally did make your return, did it play out just as you had hoped it would?

JERICHO: I knew that it would take a couple of months to find out what I wanted to do. I thought coming back as a babyface was a bit miscast, but you do what you are told to do, or are asked to do by the boss of the company. But I still knew that I wanted to change some things, and that's why I came back the way I did. I didn't come back with long hair. I remember a friend of mine before I came back asked, "Are you going to get hair extensions?" And I was like, "Why?" And he said, "Well, Chris Jericho has long hair." Well, so did Bruce Dickinson in 1987. And now Bruce Dickinson is a better singer than he's ever been in Iron Maiden, and he's got short hair. So it's obviously not the hair that matters. It's the guy. So, I wanted to change things, and

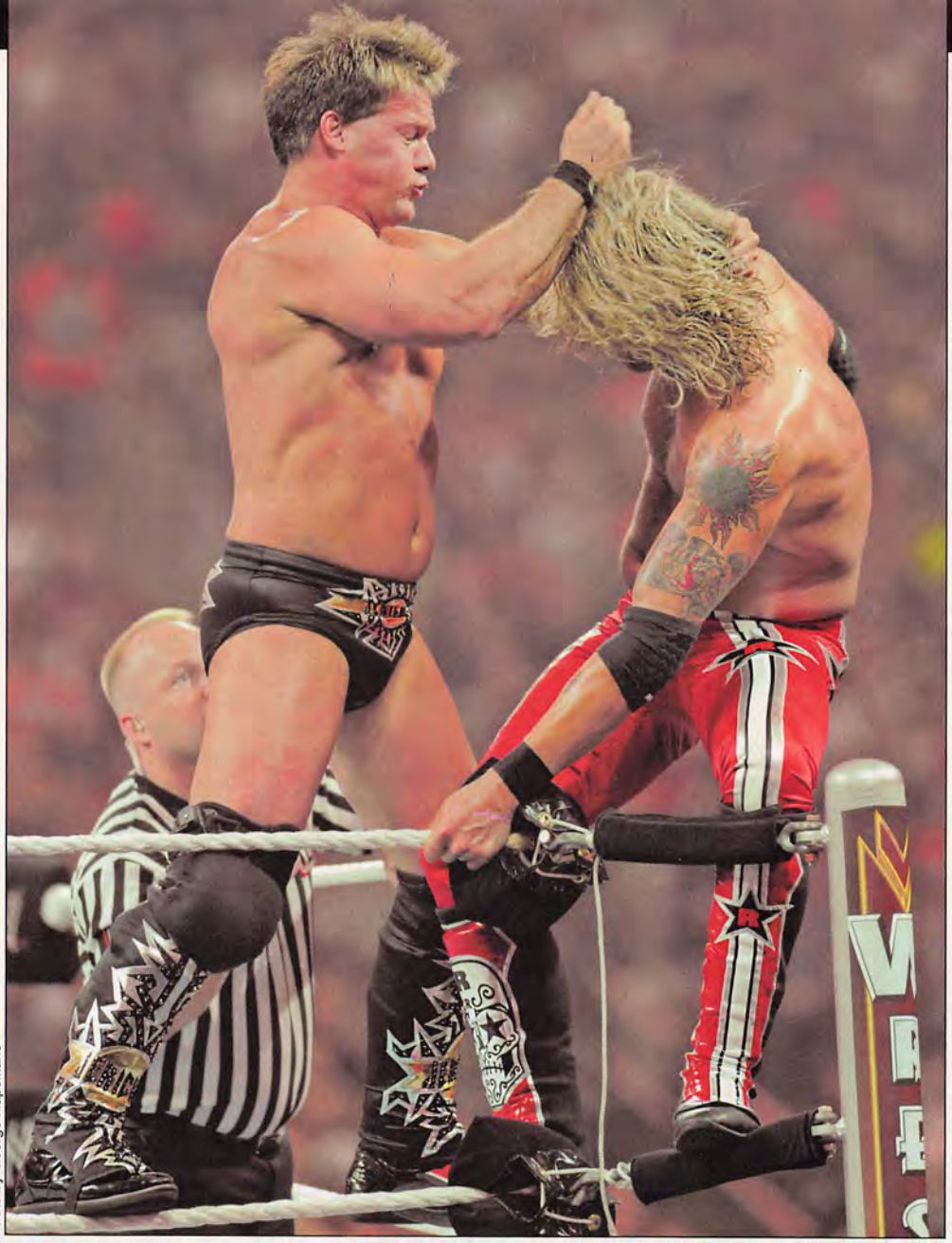


Photo by George Napolitano

Not only did he enter WrestleMania 26 as the World champion, Jericho also left the event wearing the big gold belt. Jericho looks back fondly on his work with Edge and wishes they had only had the full amount of time for it to develop.

I did that. And then I really got in the groove after all these years of kind of being in the groove, but not really. I always knew I could be better in wrestling, and I kind of attained that in the last two years. Is it the best that Chris Jericho could ever be? I'm not going to say that, but it's the best Chris Jericho has ever been over the course of his career.

CASTLE: Was it particularly frightening to embark on that radical change in character? You had been doing the Y2J for so long. Before it was even Y2J, it was loud, boisterous, explosive. And it was such a complete 180 to strip it down to the point that you're not even smiling. You're just walking out in your suit, a grimace on your face. I'd think that that was a pretty big gamble on your part.

JERICHO: It wasn't frightening at all. It was cool because it was a captivating thing. I wanted to be completely different from anything I'd ever been before. I wanted to reinvent myself 100 percent. So that meant getting rid of the fun guy. The countdown was gone. I switched to the short tights, short hair. Everything that I did before I just changed to the opposite, and that's why I did it. I always believed that when you turn heel, you should change and make people realize that they're not dealing with the same old guy. I heard, "Well, people want to cheer for you." Exactly. Of course you do. That's why I did it—because people love the Y2J character. And when I got rid of it completely, people were like, "You're going to bring it back, aren't you?" And I was like, "No. This is what you get. This is a new guy all the way across the board." I wanted people to see that I wasn't screwing around. So, no countdown, the only thing I kept was my music. I kept that the same because—I hate to use the word iconic—but it is very identifiable to who I am as a performer. But everything else changed, and that was all a calculated call from me. I wasn't terrified about it at all. I'm always about the future. I never stay in the past, ever. It's always, "What can I do better and how can I change things?" It's why I did things that way.

CASTLE: You were somebody who really embraced being hated. For so long there's been that "cool heel" thing, where even guys who turn heel still play for applause. You were loathsome. You were just a total jerk. I think now we're seeing more and more of that kind of thing. I think The Miz is like that. To some extent, Wade Barrett is. It's kind of a return to that heel that embraced being hated.

JERICHO: Well, at least they

Photo by George Napolitano

Though it may not have seemed like much at the time, Jericho really enjoyed working with Edge and everyone else in building up the WWE vs. Nexus match at Survivor Series. He says it was one of his favorite feuds since his return.

think they embrace being hated. But I took it to the next level. There were no catchphrases. There became some by proxy from the stuff that I said. But I never set out to make "I'm the best in the world at what I do" or "shameless pandering" catchphrases. I mean, who would ever think that "gelatinous parasite" would be a catchphrase?

CASTLE: I like "mucilaginous troglodyte." You had me look that one up.

JERICHO: Yeah, I was just saying whatever I could, and when people started repeating it, I didn't like that. I never wanted to have a catchphrase. I didn't want merchandise. There's no Chris Jericho merchandise. There's no Chris Jericho T-shirt. All that stuff was because of me. They wanted to make a T-shirt, but I said, "Why? Why would I want someone wearing a T-shirt in the crowd that has my name on it? That's one guy in the crowd that's not going to boo me." It's an art form to be a heel and to stay a heel. Because the best characters of all times are villains. Darth Vader. Terminator. Hannibal Lector. Freddy Kruger. And all those villains turned babyface because they were so entertaining. Each one of those guys I said, in the second or third movie, became a good guy. If Heath Ledger hadn't passed away, he would have been a good guy in the next *Batman* movie, guaranteed, because he was too entertaining. So it's easier to make people hate you than to make them love you. But it's very, very difficult to make them stay hating you, and I was able to do that for 2½ years, because every time I was going down on a road where people were starting to get into it, I'd turn it, change it, go back and forth. That's why the Shawn Michaels angle worked and the Rey Mysterio Jr. angle worked—because there was no comedy behind it.

CASTLE: But was it always "all fun, no play"? Seems like that would get a little tiring after a while and really drain on you.

JERICHO: Over those last three years there were some comedy bits, and that was fine. There was that whole Bob Barker thing for example. And most of the guest host stuff was done for fun. Once again, you can't do the same thing all the time. But the crux of it was to be very serious. Like you said, a loathsome jerk who has no redeeming qualities to him. And that's why it worked. I did enjoy playing that because it's a challenge. It's hard to do. You can't just go out there and say, if you're in New York City, "Ah, I hate the Yankees. The Yankees suck." *Boo!* "Well, I'm a great heel." No, that's cheap heat. The secret is, how do you get the people in New York to boo you without saying that? Saying you love the Yankees and still get them to boo you. *That's* a challenge.

CASTLE: I think you went on to have other angles that had that similar kind of intensity. You mentioned Rey Mysterio. It was maybe a notch below the Shawn Michaels feud, but several notches above almost anything else WWE was doing. What do you think you were bringing to your rivalries that made them more intense, more personal, more compelling than anything else that was going on in WWE?

JERICHO: First of all, it goes back to the international experience I was talking about before. [Rey and I] had a lot of places we could go, a lot of things we could dip into. The whole Mexican culture of the mask match, and all the

When Roddy Piper let Jericho have it before their match at WrestleMania 25, Jericho felt that he helped bring out the best from one of the greatest heels to ever live. He credits Piper for being the forgotten man behind WWE's ascension in the 1980s.

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spots you do during a mask match. There was just so much stuff that Rey and I could do because we had that history there. Not a lot of people know what it's like to be in Mexico wrestling, and we both did, obviously. And the real thing was the mask. That was the major, major thing. And they had kind of flirted with mask vs. mask matches before, and losing a mask. But this was real. This was not just a one-time thing. This was a three- or four-month crusade for Jericho to take his mask. And why did I want to take his mask? Because I could. End of story. I was explaining that to Vince, "I'm a bully and I want your milk money."

"Well, why do you want his milk money?" Vince would ask.

"Because I *want* it." And that's the reason that I wanted his mask, because I was a bully. It was about giving me that reward. Why can't everyone wear one? Why does he get to wear one?"

CASTLE: After the Michaels and Mysterio feuds, were you disappointed at all where Chris Jericho went in WWE? You went on to main event several more pay-per-views, but I don't know if anything you did was as compelling as those two feuds. And toward the end there, you were losing a lot on TV and working with some newer, younger guys. Any disappointment or bitterness over the last year or so?

JERICHO: What was there to be bitter about? I was the World champion at WrestleMania. Some times you have angles that really connect and really work. Other times you try as best you can to do things well. The big thing at the time was that Edge got hurt. We had a lot of plans to do this big tag team that split up and then go from there. And then Edge got hurt and we had to change everything. I think the stuff with Big Show was great. I think it turned out way better than it had reason to. I enjoyed that immensely. And then when Edge came back, we kind of had to start really quickly, from scratch almost. And I enjoyed the stuff that I did with Edge. As far as losing, the only guys who were really stuck on the losing were guys who were reporting on it. Most of the losses were my idea. It's not like there was anything going on behind the scenes. Once again, we're at a time where you have a lot of young guys and you've got to build them up quickly, so you have them win. I could lose every night. I can lose to you. You think anybody's going to care? Nobody. And the whole thing with The Nexus, I thought the whole last

month building up to SummerSlam was genius, with me and Edge being the stirrers involved. I loved that angle. I thought it was amazing.

CASTLE: One that I neglected to mention, because it slipped my mind but definitely deserves mention with some of the best work you've done in the last couple years, was the angle you did with the legends leading up to WrestleMania 25

JERICHO: Yeah, that's kind of a forgotten angle that I did. It was all those promos. Everybody's talking about that promo that [Roddy] Piper did before Survivor Series this year. People forgot the promo that he did before WrestleMania that year in Tacoma, Washington. I went up to him beforehand and we were talking and I said, "Listen, dude, I don't want Roddy Piper, the funny, happy guy. I want the Roddy Piper who was the biggest heel in the world at WrestleMania I. The guy is the forgotten man in the reason why that company was built." That show was a success because of Hogan and Cyndi Lauper. But if it wasn't for Piper being the quintessential jackass heel, that show never would have worked. And I said *that's* the guy I want to talk to tonight. And he responded in spades. He was great. So, yeah, that's one of those angles that I did that people forgot, but at the time was very, very good.

CASTLE: The match actually kind of seemed like it came out of nowhere. You were going after legends for months on end and there seemed to be no payoff to come. Then, out of nowhere, here's the official match for WrestleMania 25.

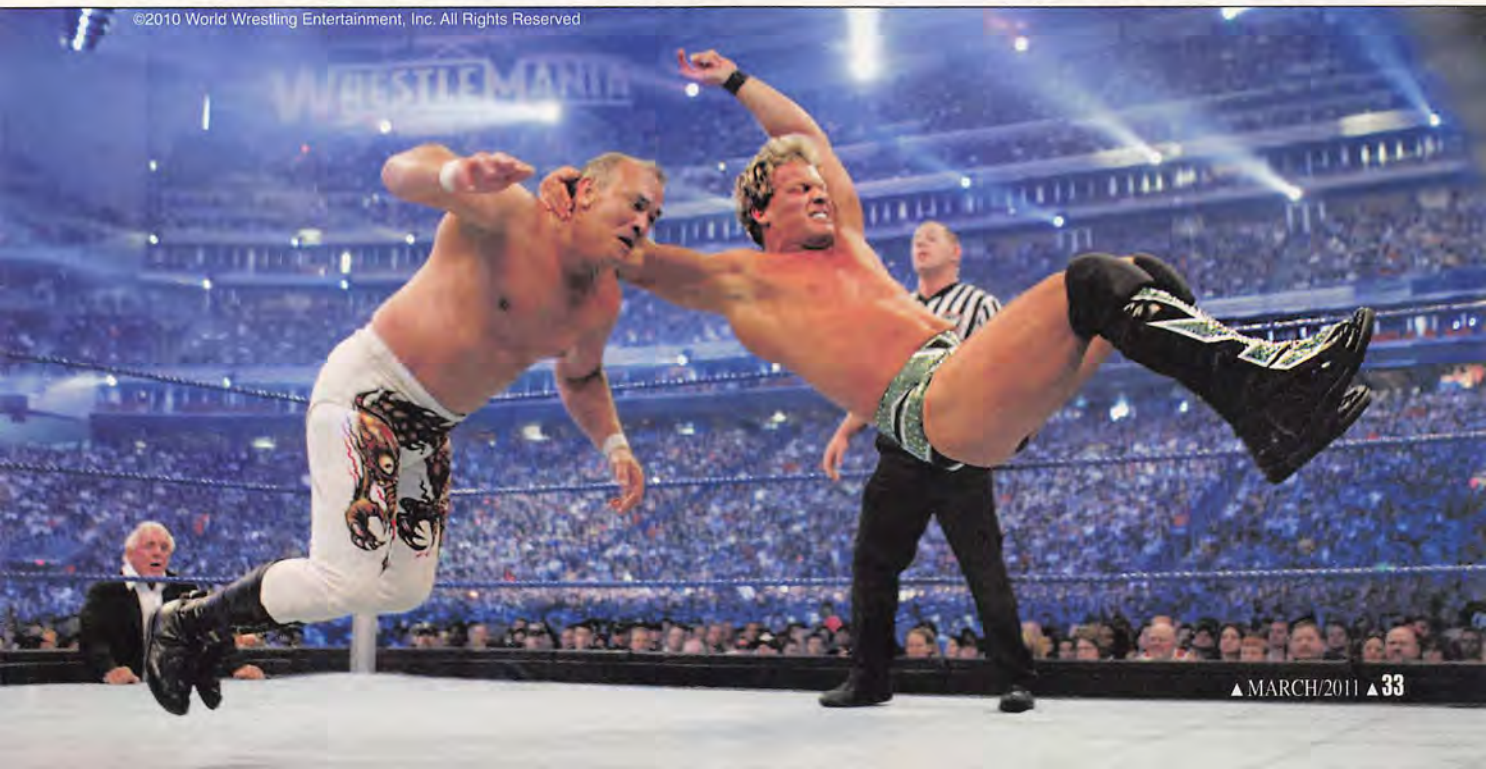
JERICHO: And that's all because Mickey Rourke was going to do a match and then pulled out of it, so we were kind of left holding the bag. Vince had this idea to do something with the legends. The criteria was that they had to be in the Hall of Fame and they had to be in the first WrestleMania. That's why we teased [Jerry] Lawler for a while, but Lawler didn't meet Vince's criteria, because he wasn't in the first WrestleMania. So Vince wanted [Greg] Valentine. And I said, "Listen, man. If that is going to have any chance of being a good match, they've got to get somebody else in there." So I asked if we could have Steamboat. And at the time there were some problems with Steamboat's name. I don't know if his ex-wife owned it, or whatever it was. And I think Vince was a little reluctant at first. But after a while, we went with Steamboat, and that's when I said, "Okay, this is going to be great. Finally I've got somebody I can work with."

CASTLE: How surreal was that for you—not only to work with Rick Steamboat at that point, but to have some really good matches with him?

JERICHO: I wasn't in awe, and it isn't "surreal" by the time you get to that point in your career. It's like when I worked with Hogan in 2002. Hogan was my all-time favorite, but I didn't go into the ring with stars in my eyes and mark out for him. At that point, I'm one of his peers. So it's time to get the job done, make the donuts, and make some magic here. That was the same with Steamboat. I mean, it was cool for about three seconds, and then after that it was like, "We've got to make this work and get things going." I knew Ricky would respond that way. It would be like Wayne Gretzky coming back to play hockey now. He'd still be better than 80 percent of the roster, because he's that good. And Ricky was.

CASTLE: Let me ask you a little bit about your new book, *Undisputed.* Your first book was just tremendous. For my money, it's one of, if not the, best wrestling autobiography I've read. Just compelling,

There was a early moment when Jericho was awestruck being in the ring with Rick Steamboat, but then he settled in and did his part to present a match that was surprisingly entertaining.



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Don't take the look on Chris Jericho's face to mean anything; he had a lot of fun working with The Big Show after Edge was shelved with a torn Achilles tendon.

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really funny. I just loved jumping from country to country and getting a peek at the wrestling scene there at that particular time. Did that give you any added pressure in writing this followup?

JERICHO: Yeah, there was a lot of pressure. I wanted a *Godfather II* with this one—a sequel that's better than the original. And that's why I wrote the book the way I did the first time. To include everything up until that point in 2007 I would have had to compromise some of the earlier stories. And I knew I had so much stuff that I didn't want to do that. And when it came time to write the second book, it took a long time to get my butt in gear and to do it, because it's a big commitment. It takes a lot of time. And that's why it took me about a year-and-a-half to do it properly. And I didn't even start working on it until January of this year. I had the deal two years before that, but you can't just jump into something like that half-assed. You have to give it your all, 100 percent. And that's something I do for everything I've done as Chris Jericho. If you see my name on it, you know it's 100 percent. That's why it took a while to get this book out. I wanted to make it just as good, if not better, than the first one. And I think I've done that. I think this book is in a lot of ways better than the original, because the first book was dealing with a lot of stories that nobody ever knew. This one deals with a lot of stories that people do know, or think they know … If you thought the first book was the best wrestling book ever, then this is definitely the best wrestling sequel ever.

CASTLE: What do you see as your legacy? Not a ranking or anything like that, but when you're dead and gone, how do you want to be remembered in the wrestling business?

JERICHO: Just as a guy who entertained, who gave his best every single night and found different ways to do that. I think I'll probably be remembered in a lot of people's eyes as an overachiever, but in my eyes, I achieved exactly what I always knew I would do. When I started in 1990, there was a real prejudice against me because I was small. In the '90s it was all about how big guys were. I just never accepted it. I don't *think* I'm small. I mean, I *know* I'm small, but I was never going to let it hinder me. So I found other ways to do it. So I went to other countries and I worked on my character and I worked on my presentation and I worked on my showmanship. So I was lucky that I was doing all of that for 10 years. And by the time I came into WWE in 1999, it was almost like the perfect storm. It was the right time to be a guy my size to really make your mark.

CASTLE: I went to a house

show in Newark, New Jersey, earlier this year where Y2J returned. You announced before the match that Y2J was back, and you worked the match as a babyface and you were slapping hands at ringside with fans. I wondered if that was kind of your way of saying goodbye. Can you give me insight into what was that about?

JERICHO: You're reading too much into this, man. This isn't *The Da Vinci Code* where there are all these secret messages … I started as a heel, and then turned into a babyface. That's the one where I challenged Cena to a match, and then Sheamus beat him up. And then Nexus came down and beat me up. And then Orton came down. And I said, "You're going to see the one night only return of Y2J!" or whatever it was. The thing is, at the end of that match if I wanted to turn back into a bad guy, all it would have taken was two seconds to do it … there was definitely no goodbye.

(Pretending to sob) "This is my last show in Newark." I don't want that. I don't ever want that big, overblown Shawn Michaels-Ric Flair goodbye. I don't want it. Good for those guys that got it. I don't want it. If I never wrestle another day, I wouldn't feel bad about the fact that I never got my last applause and got to ride off into the sunset. I'm a bad guy. Bad guys are cowards. Bad guys die at the end of movies. And that's it. You never see them again. That's what I want to happen to me. □

Photos by George Napolitano

Winning and losing doesn't mean much to Chris Jericho. He looks back on his final months as giving back to the younger generation and helping to get the likes of Evan Bourne (left) and Wade Barrett (below) over as competitors to one day lead WWE.

2010 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Photo by Mark W. Hill

Linda McMahon tried to bring fresh ideas to the Connecticut Senate race, but the media was too consumed with WWE storylines from nearly a decade ago. The former WWE CEO promised supporters that her political ambitions remained intact.

2010 was a year of bravado ... and of subsequent backtracking. It was a year where youth was served and where grizzled ring veterans reminded us of past glories. It was a year where loyalties thought to be unwavering were questioned, and two of the sport's most popular stars flirted with the dark side (with one of them embracing his inner "antichrist.")

Linda McMahon epitomized bravado when she threw her hat into the political ring, announcing she would run for the United States Senate. Even though she had resigned from her position as CEO, Linda and World Wrestling Entertainment remained closely intertwined. WWE programming shifted to a more family-friendly (and voter-friendly) style, but the company still came under heavy scrutiny as the media took note of the epidemic of wrestlers who died young, the controversial storylines of years past, and WWE's classification of its wrestlers as independent contractors. WWE fired back with the "Stand Up For WWE" campaign, encouraging fans to counter the negative articles in the media (and, perhaps, for WWE fans in Connecticut to cast their vote for Linda). However, even after spending $50-million of her own money to finance her campaign, Linda lost the election to Democratic opponent Richard Blumenthal.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Eric Bischoff and Hulk Hogan were so bold as to think TNA could actually compete with WWE on Monday nights. Fortunately for them and the company, ratings returned to normal—and then some—when *Impact* returned to Thursday nights.

TNA showed its bravado when it began a new era with Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff at the helm. TNA opened up its pocketbook and signed Ric Flair, Rob Van Dam, Jeff Hardy, Mr. Anderson, and others. Looking to recreate the Monday Night War of old, TNA moved *Impact* from Thursdays to Mondays to challenge WWE head-to-head. The move proved to be a disaster as ratings dwindled and morale dropped. Barely two months later, TNA backtracked and moved back to Thursday nights. By the end of the year, the Hogan/Bischoff regime reproduced another idea from WCW's past, forming Immortal, a rulebreaking faction headed by Hogan that bore a striking resemblance to the New World Order.

While TNA looked to veterans for leadership, a youth movement was underway in WWE. Younger stars such as Jack Swagger, Sheamus, Drew Mc-

Intyre, and Dolph Ziggler developed into title contenders. WWE also bade farewell to its version of ECW and introduced *WWE NXT,* a program that partnered eight WWE "rookies" (some of whom had several years experience, including Ring of Honor icon Bryan "Daniel Bryan" Danielson) with a WWE pro and had them compete for a spot on the WWE roster. Through four seasons, *NXT* introduced the WWE Universe to 28 future superstars.

Of course, *NXT* also spawned The Nexus, WWE's top heel faction of 2010. Led by *NXT* Season One winner Wade Barrett, Nexus ran roughshod over the Raw brand, attacking enemies at will and becoming main-event stars through the second half of the year.

As for veterans, two of the sport's all-time greats shined once again on the WrestleMania stage. The Undertaker and Shawn Michaels once again delivered a classic bout, with "The Dead Man" keeping his incredible streak intact and forcing the "Heartbreak Kid" into retirement.

John Cena took it from Wade Barrett and took it some more. And the world patiently awaited the day when he would unveil some sort of counter strategy or just go completely berserk. Fortunately, as the old year ends and a new one begins, Cena seems to have chosen the former.

Photos by George Napolitano

One person many people thought would never again set foot in a WWE ring returned in a big way as Bret "The Hitman" Hart came back to settle some old scores. "The Hitman" gave Vince McMahon the beating of his life at WrestleMania 26 and finally exorcized the demons of "The Montreal Screwjob."

John Cena and Jeff Hardy found themselves at personal crossroads. For Cena, a controversial loss to Barrett resulted in him becoming an unwilling member of Nexus. Cena was forced into making a difficult decision: sell out his ethics and deliver the WWE title to Barrett or risk losing his job.

Hardy sold his soul to Immortal and became the new chosen one of the Hogan/Bischoff regime. The Most Popular Wrestler of the 2009 embraced his new role as the self-proclaimed "antichrist of professional wrestling."

The past 12 months saw controversy and comedy, unforgettable matches and Cinderella stories, successes and failures. We've only scratched the surface here. If a picture is worth a thousand words, the only way we can describe the year that was within the space constraints of this magazine is through photographs. Enjoy this look at the images of 2010, an unforgettable year in wrestling.

The look in Undertaker's eyes told Shawn Michaels what he really didn't want to know: There was no way he was going to beat this man at WrestleMania. So ended a brilliant career and kept alive the most heralded streak in the sport's history.

Photo by George Napolitano

JACK SWAGGER PROVED TO BE A RELUCTANT COMPANION FOR THE DEBUT SCREENING OF *KNUCKLEHEAD*

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

SO IT *DOES* EXIST!

"Section 4, Article 2: Management reserves the right to throw this book out the window at any time."

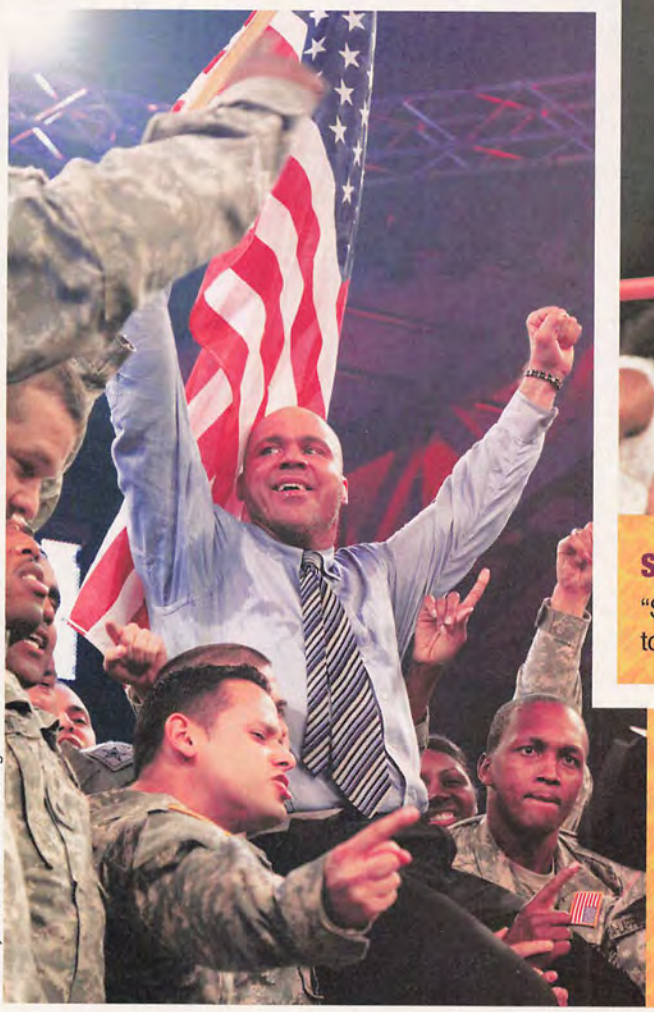

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

WE DON'T QUESTION HIS PATRIOTISM ... BUT WE DO QUESTION HIS CHOICE OF ANTI-PERSPIRANT

Kurt Angle once again became an American hero by honoring the U.S. Armed Forces during his feud with Mr. Anderson. No one can say Kurt didn't work up a sweat.

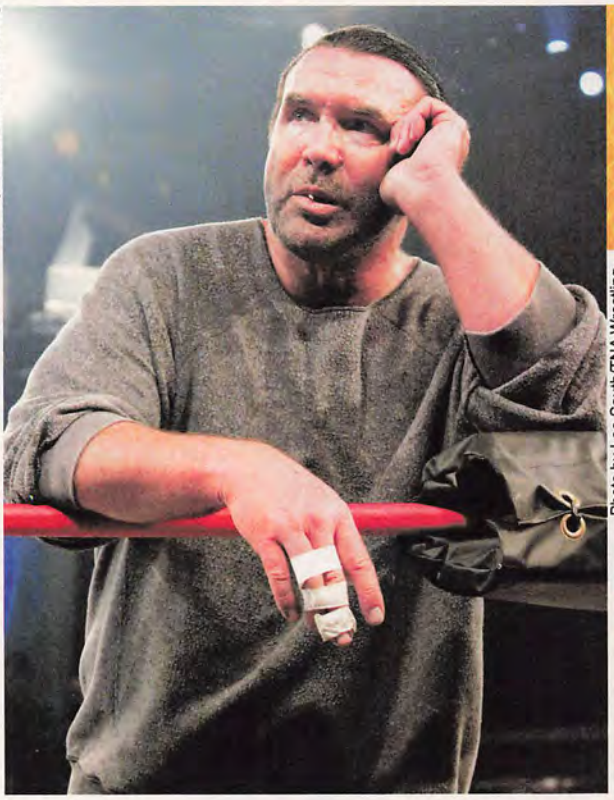

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

PORTRAIT OF "THE THINKER," A MAN LOST IN DEEP CONTEMPLATION OF LIFE, THE AFTERLIFE, AND THE PROFOUND NATURE OF MAN

Or, perhaps, "I wonder if The Ale House is still serving those fried mozzarella sticks I like so much …" They *are* yummy, Scott.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

TRYING TO KNOCK SOME SENSE BACK INTO HIM

Eric Young exhibited some bizarre behavior in 2010. After the collapse of World Elite, E.Y. became a fan favorite and feuded with The Band (Scott Hall, Kevin Nash, and Sean Waltman). A short time later, Young turned on Team 3-D, joined The Band, and became a co-holder of the TNA tag title. When Hall and Waltman left, Young went solo, then suffered a "head injury" that had him acting like a loon. Maybe this cane shot from Brother Ray had something to do with his delicate mental state.

HE MAY NOT BE THE MOST POPULAR GUY IN THE WWE UNIVERSE, BUT HE'S CERTAINLY THE MOST POPULAR MAN AT THE FRAT HOUSE ON SATURDAY NIGHT

Based on his physique, it can be safely assumed that Husky Harris knows his way around a beer keg. Surprisingly, Harris lost this *NXT* Season 2 challenge to Lucky Cannon. Harris broke a cardinal rule—he dropped the keg.

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Photo by George Tahinos

CHUTZPAH

Even after taking a brutal beating from Kurt Angle in an intense cage match at Lockdown, Mr. Anderson was still scrappy enough to disrespect Angle and flip him the bird. He really is what he says he is … wrestling's biggest @$$h_le.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

DON'T LAUGH. ERIC YOUNG'S PARTNER MAY BE A MANNEQUIN, BUT IT STILL KNOWS TWO MORE MOVES THAN ROB TERRY

When have you ever seen Rob Terry go off the top rope, for instance?

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

SOMETIMES MEETING YOUR CHILDHOOD HERO ISN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE

Jay Lethal had always idolized Ric Flair. When the "Nature Boy" arrived in TNA, Lethal paid tribute to Flair by doing a spot-on impression of Flair. Flair wasn't amused, particularly since Lethal incorporated Flair's Hall of Fame ring into the act. Flair slapped Lethal and Lethal responded in kind, setting off a spirited feud that forced Lethal to fight his childhood hero.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

SOUND ADVICE: NEVER ACCEPT A FRUIT SMOOTHIE FROM ORLANDO JORDAN

ONE LUCKY LITTLE PERSON

Puppet the Psycho Dwarf made a guest appearance on *Impact* to promote Spike TV's new television project, *Half Pint Brawlers*, a wrestling show featuring a roster of little people. After commentating on a match involving The Beautiful People, the ever-randy Puppet gave Velvet Sky a goose, then had a brief make-out session with Lacey Von Erich. That had to be more satisfying for Puppet than the Spike show, which proved to be short-lived (sorry … we couldn't resist).

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Photo by George Napolitano

A SWEET VICTORY

Melina spent eight months recovering from a torn ACL injury that forced her to relinquish the Divas title in January. At SummerSlam, she capped off an impressive comeback by beating Alicia Fox to regain the butterfly belt. Melina's celebration would be brief, however, as Team Lay-Cool attacked her shortly after this photo was snapped.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

THEY'RE HERE ... NOW WOULD THEY PLEASE LEAVE?

Abyss spent months talking about how "They" were coming to TNA, and how everything was about to change. At Bound for Glory, "They" finally arrived. Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff joined forces with Abyss, Jeff Jarrett, and Jeff Hardy as Immortal. Decried by many as yet another attempt to re-create the NWO, Immortal took control of the company from Dixie Carter and began a new era of controversy in TNA.

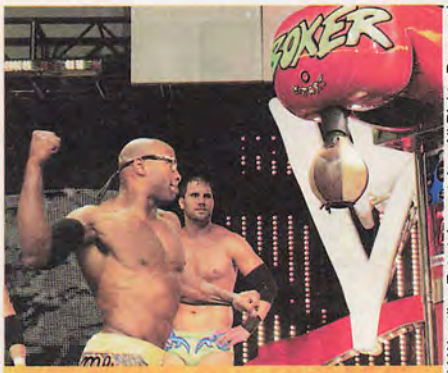
Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

TAKING THE BELT OUT TO THE SHORE

Robbie E and Cookie, collectively known as The Shore, may not have been the most popular TNA newcomers of the year, but they were certainly successful. *The Jersey Shore* wannabes captured the X division championship and taught the Impact Zone how to fist pump like a champ. They also took our own Liz Hunter out club-hopping and stuck her with the cover charges.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

SAMOA JOE: TO KNOW HIM IS TO WANT TO SLUG HIM



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PERCY WATSON MAY NOT HAVE HAD THE STRONGEST PUNCH ON *NXT*, BUT HIS "BOXER" VIDEO GAME PROWESS *DID* WIN HIM EIGHT TICKETS AT CHUCK E. CHEESE'S

Word is he used those tickets to buy some sweet shades.

HE MAY BE A LOUSY DANCER, BUT HE MAKES A BETTER DANCER THAN ANNOUNCER

Michael Cole proved himself to be a less-than-objective commentator in 2010, particularly in regard to his inexplicable dislike of Daniel Bryan. Cole tried to delight his "Cole-Miners" by busting a move with the *NXT* Season 3 would-be Divas, but his dance moves left a lot to be desired. His leg-warmers are pretty fly, though.

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Photo by George Napolitano

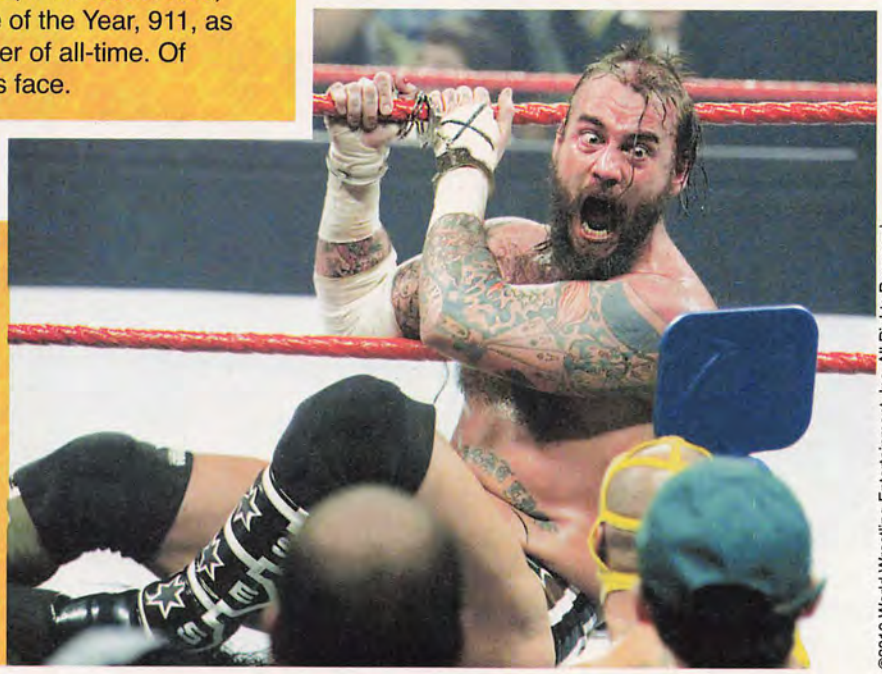
"NO, *YOU'RE* THE MOST UNDESERVING *PWI* ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER OF ALL-TIME ..."

The 2010 Woman of the Year exchanges words with the 2007 Rookie of the Year. Of course, if we had a vote, we'd have to name 1994's Rookie of the Year, 911, as the most undeserving award winner of all-time. Of course, we wouldn't say that to his face.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

REFEREE CHEAT SHEET: "WHEN A WRESTLER'S SHOULDERS ARE ON THE MAT, COUNT TO THREE. IF THE WRESTLER'S SHOULDERS COME OFF THE MAT, STOP."

Of course, if he is able to read that cheat sheet, he might actually be overqualified to be a TNA referee ...



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THE PAVEMENT "CUT YOUR HAIR" AWARD GOES TO ...

CM Punk reacts to his reflection after losing some of his locks to Rey Mysterio. Punk had his head shaved after losing a hair match to Mysterio at Over the Limit. If Punk is so concerned about his appearance, wouldn't you think he would trim that unruly beard of his?

IF YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO PICK UP CHICKS, YOU MIGHT WANT TO GET SOME POINTERS FROM D-LO BROWN AND PAT KENNEY

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

They certainly swept Tara off her feet.

YOUR 2010 "*PWI* 500," WELL AT LEAST 1.8 PERCENT OF IT

To commemorate the accomplishments of members of the Empire State Wrestling roster, "Bad Boy" Barry Hardy gave each ESW wrestler who cracked the 2010 *"PWI 500"* a framed cover of the issue, complete with their 500 bio, as a keepsake. From left (back row) are *PWI* Senior Writer Dan Murphy, Brandon Thurston (496), Barry Hardy (488), Kevin Grace (382), and Pepper Parks (294), (middle row) Chris Cooper (486), Jonny Puma 369), "Mastiff" Will Calrissian (444), Robin Knightwing (399), and (reclining) Joey Knight (395).

Photo by Frank Krewda

FEELING THE POWER OF THE FORCE

Get on Brittany Force's bad side, and you're going to get yourself in trouble, as this unfortunate soul discovered. Personally, we don't think Brittany has a bad side; all her sides look pretty darn good to us.

Photo by Frank Krewda

ALL THE GIRLS GET PRETTIER AT CLOSING TIME

So, ODB, we notice you prefer your Bud in the can …

Photo by Frank Krewda

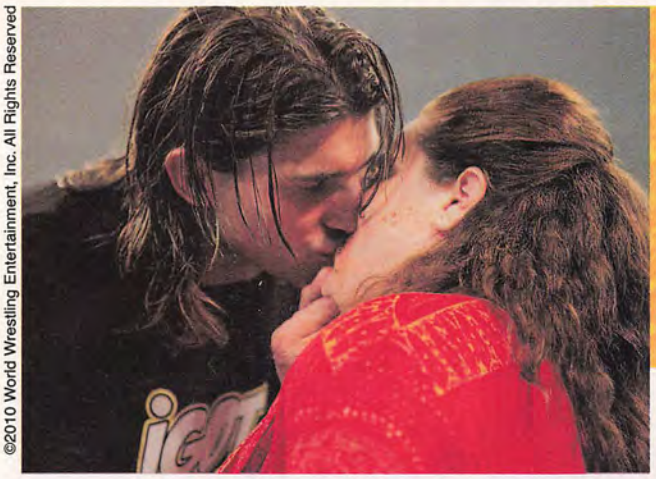
IN A TOUGH SPOT

Angel Orsini was clowning around when she put Managing Editor Jeff Ruoss in a headlock at a November WSU card, but things would take a nasty turn. Angry that *PWI* does not recognize her All Guts/No Glory title, Orsini actually attacked Ruoss in the ring. We thought Jeff was a sissy for playing recreational soccer … getting beaten up by a girl is even worse!

LIPLOCK BLOCKER

The Beautiful People love to tease the fans with their sexy ring entrance. Nothing got fanboys more worked up then when Madison Rayne and Velvet Sky went in for a quick liplock, but Lacey Von Erich was always there to put the kibosh on it. Thank goodness Lacey doesn't pal around Rayne now that she hangs out with Tara!

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling



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GETTING LUCKY

When Lay-Cool announced a kissing contest, the *NXT* Season 2 contenders were set to pucker up. Unfortunately for them, they wouldn't be smooching Michelle McCool or Layla, but an overweight woman with suspicious cold sores all over her face. Lucky Cannon was announced as the winner, but the proverbial "slump-buster" didn't help him; he was eliminated a few weeks later.

THE COBRA STRIKES

Remember Scotty 2 Hotty and "The Worm"? Santino Marella introduced us to "The Worm's" serpentine cousin, "The Cobra." It may look silly, but those who have felt The Cobra's bite (such as Heath Slater) don't laugh about it.

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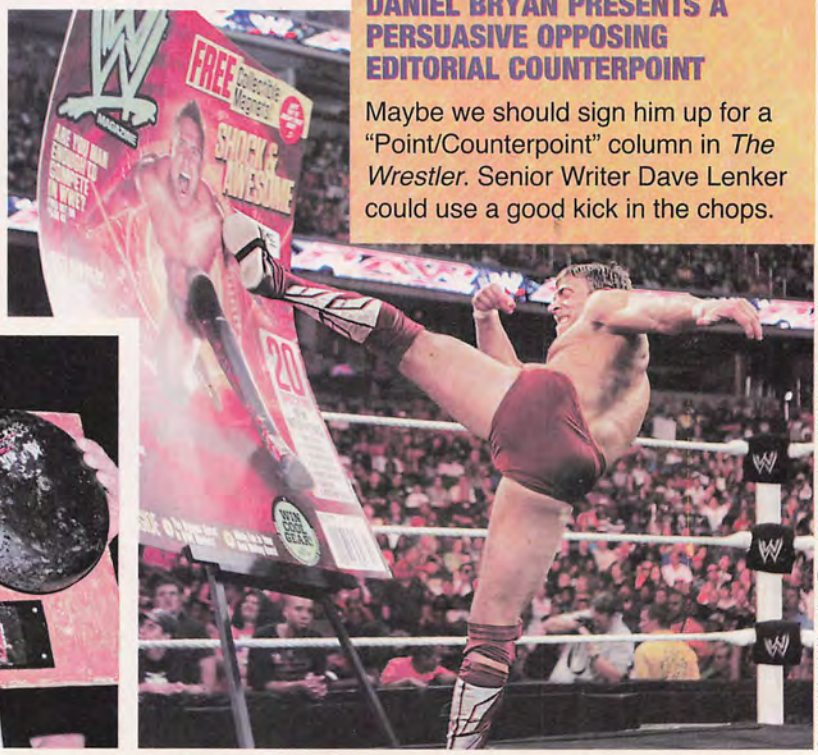
THE STREAK SURVIVES

The Undertaker extended his incredible WrestleMania winning streak to 18-0 by vanquishing Shawn Michaels in the 2010 Match of the Year at WrestleMania 26. Every year, "The Dead Man" adds another chapter to his legacy. He truly is a living legend.

DANIEL BRYAN PRESENTS A PERSUASIVE OPPOSING EDITORIAL COUNTERPOINT

Maybe we should sign him up for a "Point/Counterpoint" column in *The Wrestler*. Senior Writer Dave Lenker could use a good kick in the chops.



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THIS IS EXACTLY WHY YOU NEVER PICK UP THE RING BELL. IF THE TIMEKEEPER GETS SLOPPY WITH THE HAMMER, THE RESULTS CAN BE UGLY

Photo by George Napolitano

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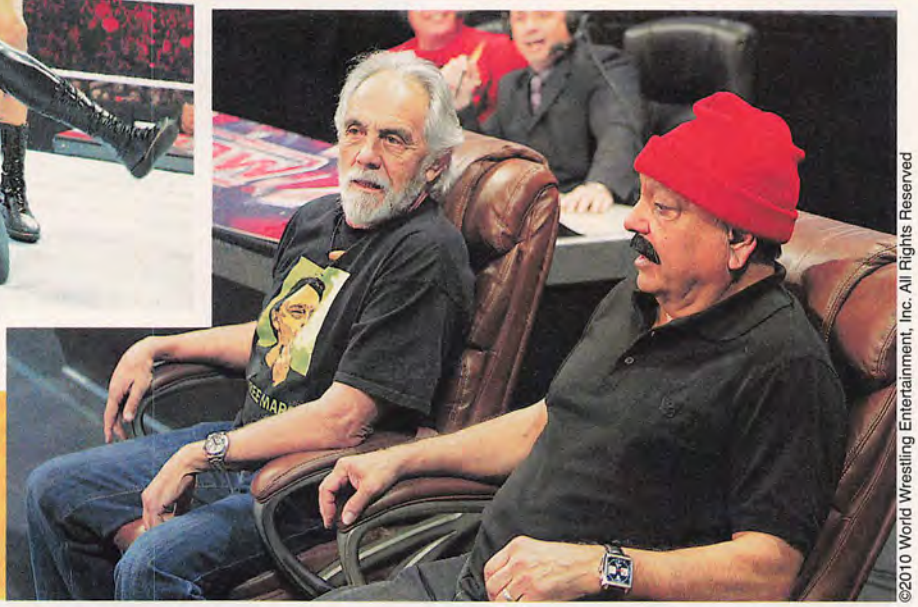
A RIGHT CROSS FROM THE CROSS-DRESSER

Goldust and William Regal squared off in a Trading Places match on *Raw* that saw each wrestler dress as his opponent for the bout. Although initially reluctant, Regal soon seemed to enjoy wearing the Goldust togs. He got so into being Goldust that he walked right into his own patented Power of the Punch brass knucks-assisted knockout punch. He should have known that Goldust had brass knuckles, considering they were hidden in his own ring gear.



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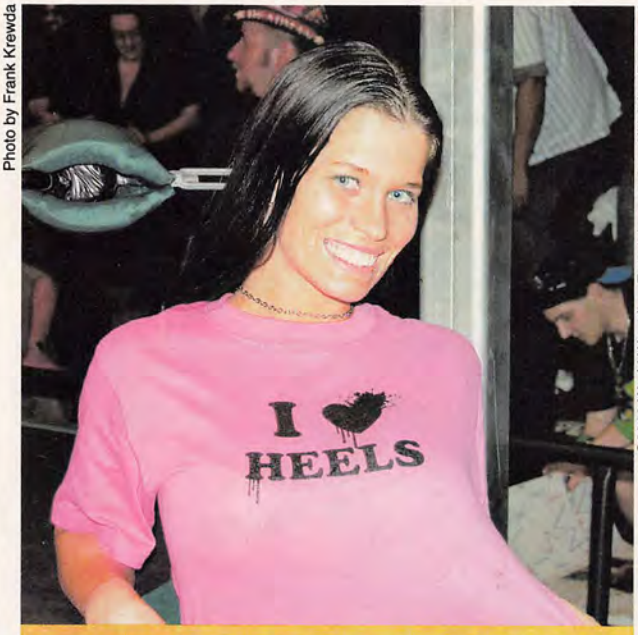
"HEY, CHEECH. ARE THESE GUYS REALLY TAKING ORDERS FROM A TALKING LAPTOP, OR AM I HAVING A WICKED FLASHBACK?"

Photo by George Tahinos

INSPIRED BY THE RUNAWAY SUCCESS OF FILMS LIKE *AVATAR* AND *CLASH OF THE TITANS*, TNA DECIDED TO TRY ITS HAND WITH 3D PROGRAMMING

And no, it did not involve Brothers Ray and Devon.

Photo by Frank Krewda



REALLY? WANNA SEE MY FOREIGN OBJECT?

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THE SWAGGER SIDEKICKS

Jack Swagger collected his first World championship this year, but some bizarre gimmickry overshadowed his championship success. He crowned himself "King Of Oklahoma" and introduced the world to his personal mascot, The Swagger Soaring Eagle, and his "father" (who bore a striking resemblance to former WCW wrestler Bunkhouse Buck). Hopefully, both Swagger's mascot and "father" got hazard pay, since both took some brutal beatings because of their association with the "All-American American."

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Photo by George Napolitano

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DOES TITLE IX WORK? ASK CM PUNK

Beth Phoenix became the second woman ever to compete in the Royal Rumble, following in the footsteps of Chyna (who competed in the 1999 and 2000 Rumbles). She used her feminine wiles to eliminate The Great Khali with a kiss, then gave CM Punk some scary moments before she was eventually eliminated by Punk. Not a bad showing for the only Rumble entrant with two X chromosomes.

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THE BROTHERS OF DESTRUCTION GO TO HELL AND BACK

Kane unveiled his master plan this summer, attacking his half-brother and putting him into a "vegetative state." After first blaming Rey Mysterio Jr. for the attack, Kane revealed he had been planning Undertaker's demise for years. To combat Kane, Undertaker went old school and summoned his urn-toting manager, Paul Bearer. But Kane stayed one step ahead of him, convincing Bearer to betray "The Dead Man." Kane got the last laugh by beating 'Taker in a Buried Alive match at Bragging Rights. We've got a feeling we haven't seen the last of "The Phenom" … and neither has Kane.

Photo by Tim Walker

"INTREPID TRAVELER" PAUL LONDON: HE MAY NOT BE AN ASTRONAUT, BUT HE *DOES* ENJOY TANG

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

THE BIGGEST GRIPE ABOUT TNA'S CATERING SELECTION IS THAT THE GUMMY FISH THEY SET OUT ALWAYS GET STUCK IN YOUR TEETH

Fortunately AJ Styles was there to lend Tommy Dreamer a helping hand with this fish hook.

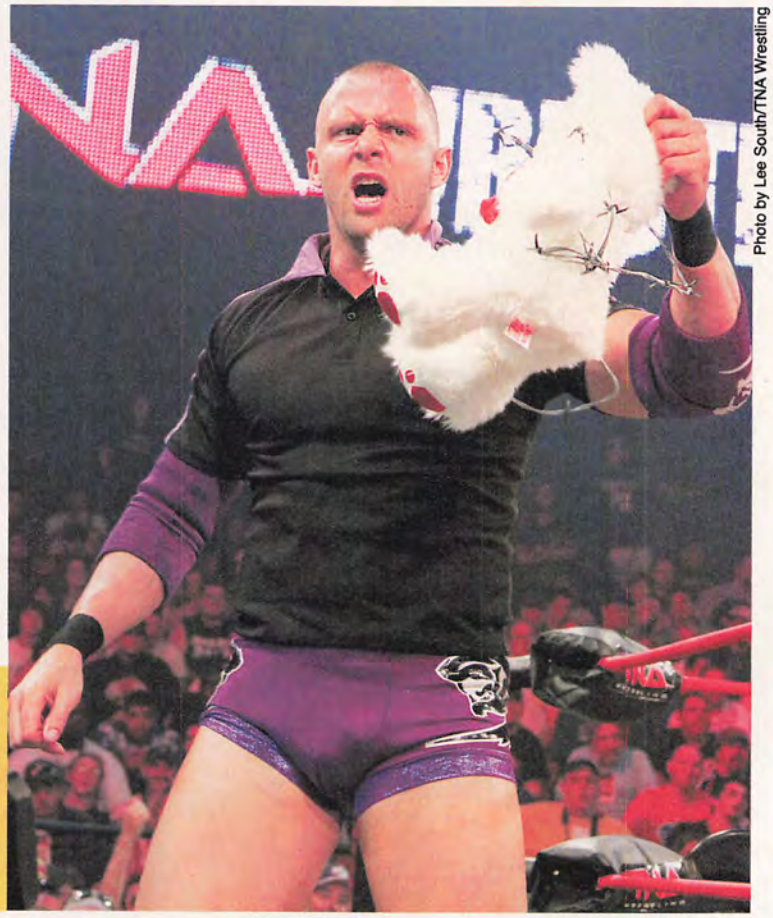

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

DUE TO AN UNFORTUNATE COMMUNICATION ERROR, VICTORIA'S SECRET MISTAKENLY SENT DESMOND WOLFE A "BARBED-WIRE TEDDY BEAR" INSTEAD OF THE "BABY DOLL TEDDY" HE ORDERED

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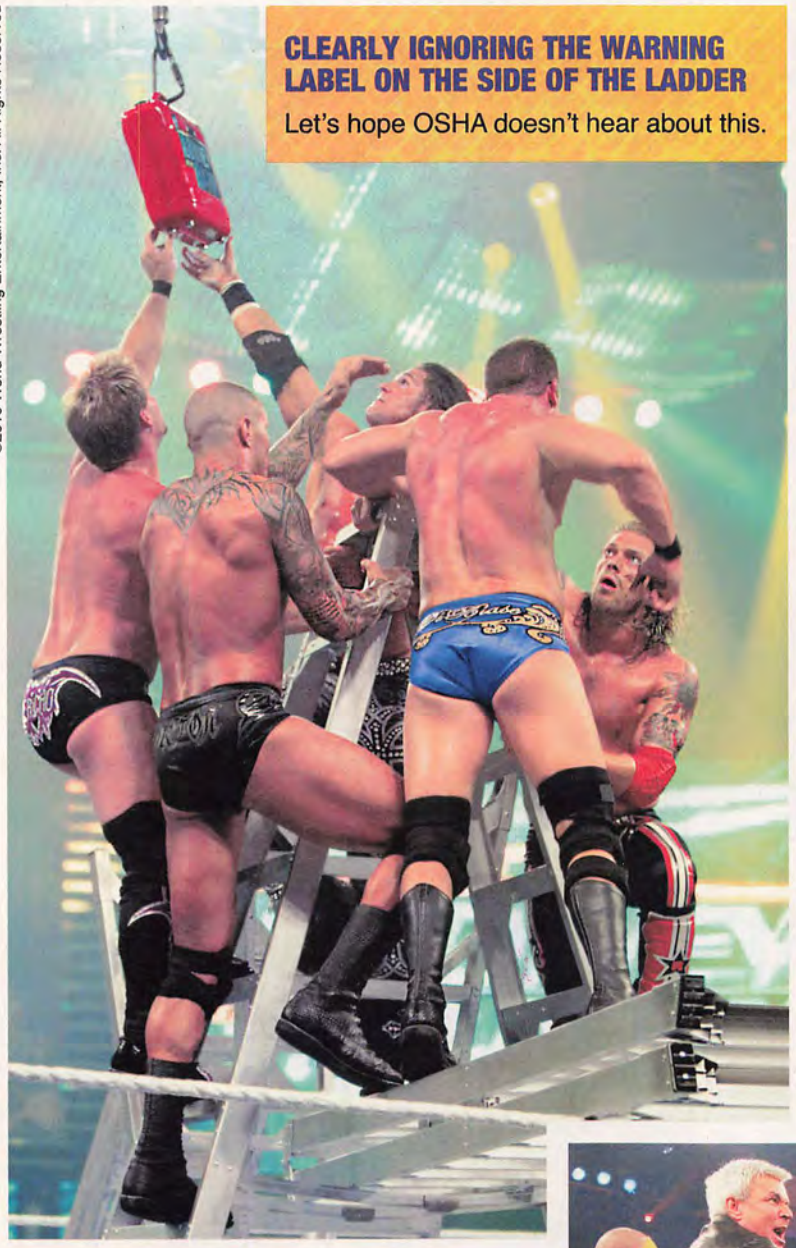

CLEARLY IGNORING THE WARNING LABEL ON THE SIDE OF THE LADDER

Let's hope OSHA doesn't hear about this.

Photo by Tim Walker

ONCE JERRY LAWLER GOT AHOLD OF MATT STRIKER'S DIARY, HE JUST COULDN'T PUT IT DOWN

UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT, PART 1

Isn't the whole idea behind unmasking a wrestler to discover his secret identity? Doesn't everyone already know that Abyss is Chris Parks? Heck, we also know who his dad is, why he was in prison, and that *Family Guy* is his favorite show. Bischoff must have some all-encompassing need to unmask people … he must be a real drag on Halloween.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT, PART 2

If Generation Me was competing in a synchronized back-flip competition, we'd have to give them props on this nifty little move. Unfortunately, the name of the game is pinning your opponent. With Alex Shelley on his back, the Buck brothers would rather hotdog than go for the win. Call them Generation Not Quite Ready for the Big Time.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

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SANTINO SHOWS TAMINA HIS COBRA

Maria Kanellis. Beth Phoenix. Now Tamina. Maybe he should steal Cody Rhodes' gimmick and be billed as "Dashing" Santino Marella.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

PAGING DR. STEVIE GHOUL AND HIS NASTY NURSE

What's a therapist doing wearing surgical scrubs, anyway? You know, we're starting to question Dr. Stevie's credentials.

Photo by George Napolitano

THE 0.5 STAR FROG SPLASH

Vickie Guerrero may not have gotten points for style or execution (she inadvertently interrupted the three-count by lifting Kelly Kelly off the canvas) but she did manage to hit a splash off the top rope to score the winning pinfall in the 10-Diva tag team match at WrestleMania 26. One more 'Mania win and she ties Eddie.

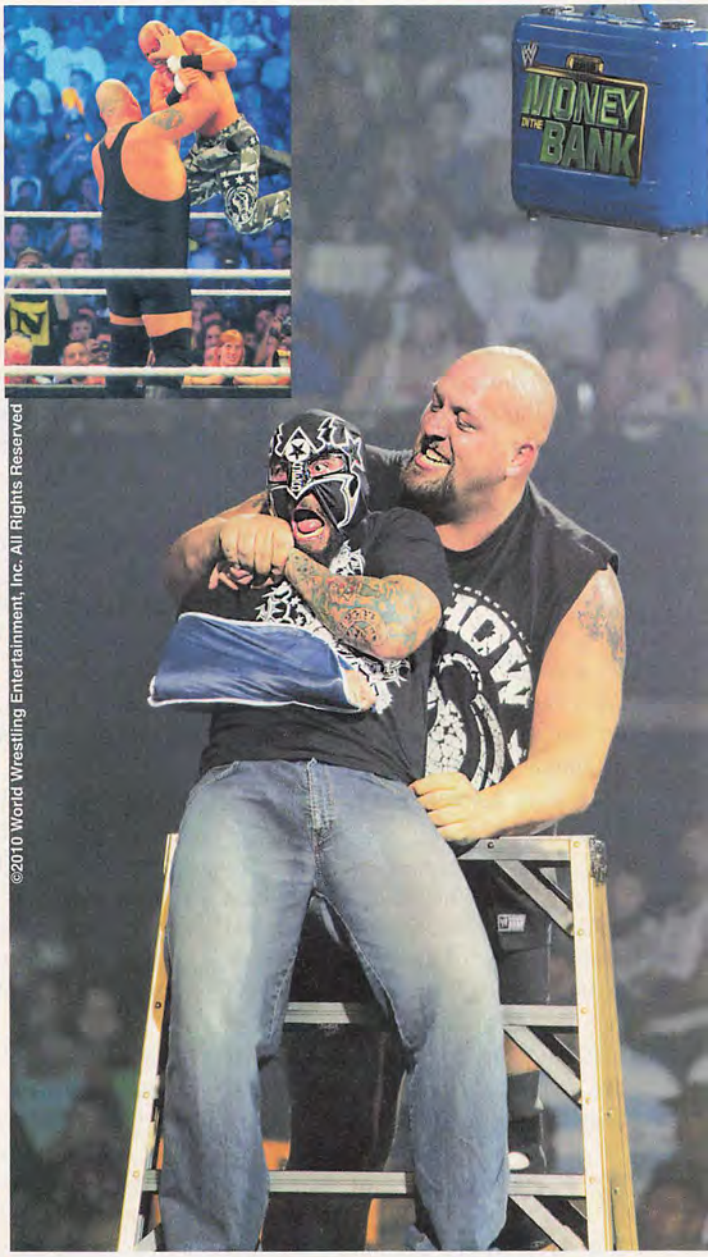

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Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

A CONCERNED JEFF JARRETT SUDDENLY REALIZES HE LEFT HIS BARBED-WIRE BATTING GLOVE AT HOME

MAKING THE STRAIGHT-EDGE SOCIETY REACH FOR THE ASPIRIN

The Big Show took special delight in manhandling CM Punk and the rest of the Straight Edge Society this summer. By the time Show was through with them, Joey Mercury, Luke Gallows, and Serena were out of WWE and Punk was running to the Raw brand to seek safety behind the announcers' table.

1.0 The Neilsen rating for the March 8 edition of *TNA Impact,* the company's debut on Monday nights opposing *WWE Raw.* Over the next two months, *Impact's* ratings would steadily drop, dipping as far as 0.5, before TNA announced *Impact* would move back to Thursday nights.

1 The 2010 "*PWI* 500" ranking of AJ Styles. Styles became the first wrestler in TNA history ever to claim the coveted top spot on the annual list.

1:37 Length of time Beth Phoenix lasted in the 2010 Royal Rumble. Phoenix became the second woman ever to compete in a Rumble match and eliminated The Great Khali before being eliminated by CM Punk.

4:13 Amount of time it took Cain Velasquez to defeat Brock Lesnar by technical knockout at UFC 121. Following the one-round loss, Lesnar was confronted by The Undertaker, starting rumors that Lesnar may return to WWE for a clash against Undertaker at WrestleMania 27.

7/4/2 Ratio of times the WWE championship, WWE World championship, and TNA World championship, respectively, changed hands from November 30, 2009, through December 1, 2010.

10 Number of successful Ring of Honor title defenses made by Tyler Black from February 13 through September 11. Black competed in several tag team and non-title bouts while holding the championship, then left ROH to sign a WWE developmental deal.

11.24 The cost, in dollars, of a pair of "Undertaker Nightmare Baby Booties" on wweshop.com.

18.95 The 12-month high value, in dollars, of a share of WWE stock through December 8, 2010. The low during that same period was $12.86.

20 Number of consecutive years both Jushin Liger and Keiji Muto have appeared in the "*PWI* 500." Liger and Muto are the only two wrestlers to have appeared every year since the first "500" in 1991. This year, Liger was ranked 317 and Muto was ranked 120.

81 Height, in inches, of would-be *WWE NXT* Season 3 contestant Aloisia. The 6'9" Diva was released by WWE when it was discovered that she had previously posed for erotic photographs, which was not in compliance with WWE's PG content standards.

83 Length of time, in days, Jack Swagger held the WWE World title. Swagger cashed in a Money in the Bank contract to upset Chris Jericho at the March 30 *Smackdown* taping and lost the World title to Rey Mysterio Jr. at the Fatal 4-Way pay-per-view.

450 Weight in pounds of Ryota Hama, perhaps the most unlikely All Japan Pro Wrestling heavyweight champion of all-time. Standing 5'9", the former sumo competitor is nearly as wide as he is tall.

900 The milestone marker WWE achieved on August when it aired its 900th episode of *Raw.* The Show premiered on January 11, 1993.

4,387 Amount of time, in days, between Kane's world championship reigns in WWE.

18,000 The reported cost, in dollars, of the specialty Immortal championship belt custom made for TNA World champion Jeff Hardy.

28,329 Number of people who signed an online petition urging WWE to reinstate Daniel Bryan following his controversial release in June.

72,219 The announced attendance of WrestleMania 26 held at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona. The pay-per-view drew approximately 885,000 buys and was the third-highest grossing PPV event in WWE history.

135,210 Estimated opening weekend revenue, in dollars, for *Legendary,* the WWE Films release starring John Cena, Danny Glover, and Patricia Clarkson. The film fared poorly in limited theatrical release and was considered a bomb, though it is expected to turn a modest profit once DVD sales and international sales are received.

50,000,000 The reported amount of dollars spent out-of-pocket by Vince and Linda McMahon to finance Linda's campaign for U.S. Senate. Linda received 43 percent of the vote, losing to Democratic candidate Richard Blumenthal in the most expensive congressional mid-term race in the country.

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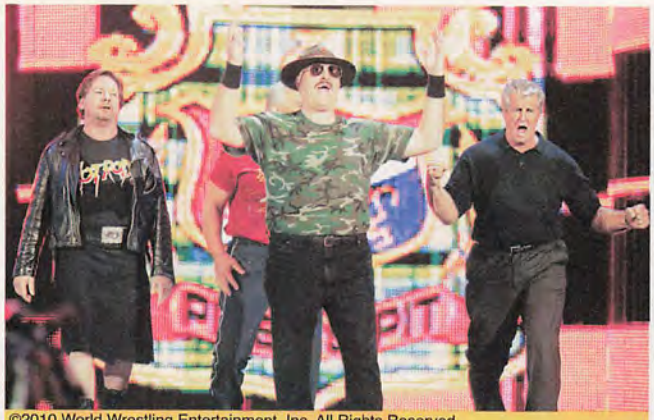
THE DECLINE AND FALL OF WOMEN'S WRESTLING

When WWE announced that the third season of *NXT* would feature an all-Divas cast, it seemed to be a sign that the company was doing more to promote its women's division and an indication that some fresh female faces would make a big mark on WWE. Instead, the world witnessed perhaps the strangest 13 weeks of wrestling programming ever to air. Vickie Guerrero had bizarre meltdowns. The Divas competed in musical chairs, WWE trivia, trash talk, and other silly competitions. The announcers openly ridiculed the show *on the air*. We're not sure what WWE is looking for in its Divas, but we do know that wrestling ability isn't a prerequisite.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

NASTY-CIZED? OR SUPER-SIZED?

Due to the unrelenting demand of absolutely no one, The Nasty Boys returned to the ring in early-2010. We don't know where they've been for the past decade, but we're pretty sure neither Knobbs nor Sags has seen the inside of the gym since the Clinton administration. After a brief feud with Team 3-D, the "Friends Of Hulk" vanished back to Nastyville. They are presumably getting nasty in local food courts.



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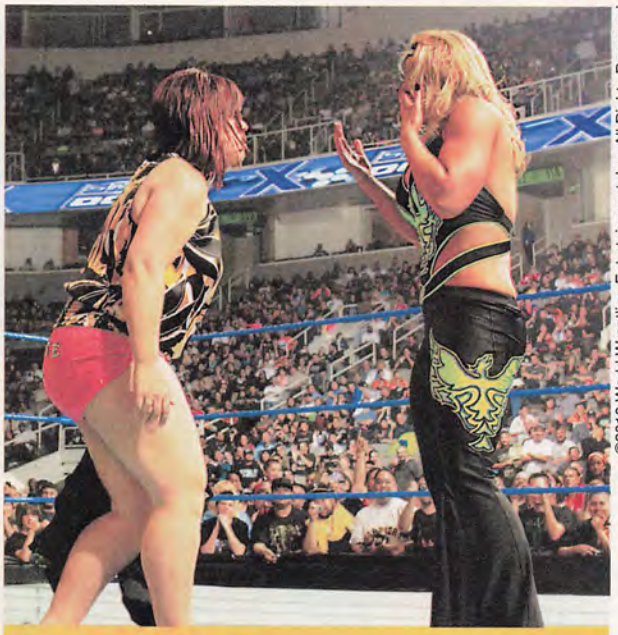
A ROWDY SCOT, A FIRE-BREATHING DRAGON, AN AMERICAN HERO, AND ... WHO IS THAT? JOHN KERRY? THE "BEFORE" GUY FROM THE "JUST FOR MEN" COMMERCIAL?

We kid. Of course we know that's five-time former WWF tag team champion Tony Garea, but he does look a bit out of place in this grouping of legends. Couldn't he at least spring for a nice Tony Garea T-shirt to wear?



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DROOPY DRAWERS

This shot of Vickie Guerrero in her "granny panties" is unsettling, but it could be worse. She *could* be wearing a thong. We think Beth Phoenix threw up a little in her mouth at the thought.

Photo by George Tahinos

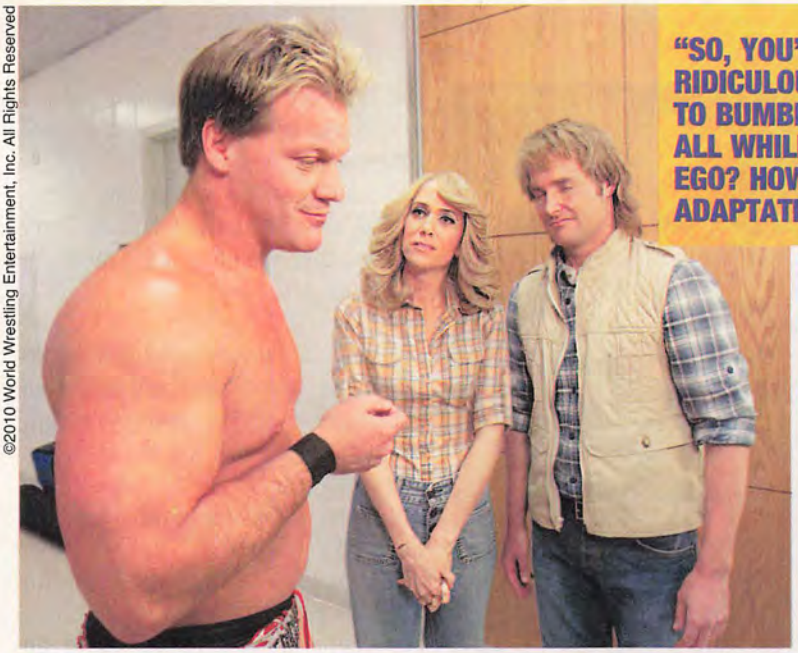
SAYING *KONICHIWA*

This fan rolled out the red carpet for the Japanese women who visited SHIMMER this spring. Pictured in his sign are joshi women Hiroyo Matsumoto, Ayumi Kurihara, Ayoka Hamada, Tomoka Nakagawa, and Misaki Ohata. Matsumoto was so impressed with the sign that she carried it into the ring, eliciting a "please come back" chant from the SHIMMER faithful.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

THEY AIN'T ALTAR BOYS

Pope D'Angelo Dinero thought he had outsmarted Immortal when he hired his "Congregation" of family and friends to serve as lumberjacks for his match against Abyss at Turning Point. Turns out that even the Congregation is looking to get paid. Bischoff bought off Pope's pals—including his brother—to steal the win for Abyss. We seem to remember someone saying, "Everyone has a price."



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"SO, YOU'RE PLAYING A GUY WITH A RIDICULOUS HAIRCUT WHO KEEPS MANAGING TO BUMBLE HIS WAY IN AND OUT OF DANGER, ALL WHILE RIDING ON AN OVER-INFLATED EGO? HOW DARE THEY MAKE A FILM ADAPTATION OF MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY!"

Photo by George Tahinos

THIS IS WHY 2 COLD SCORPIO HAS PROBLEMS FINDING A PARTNER IN CPR CLASS

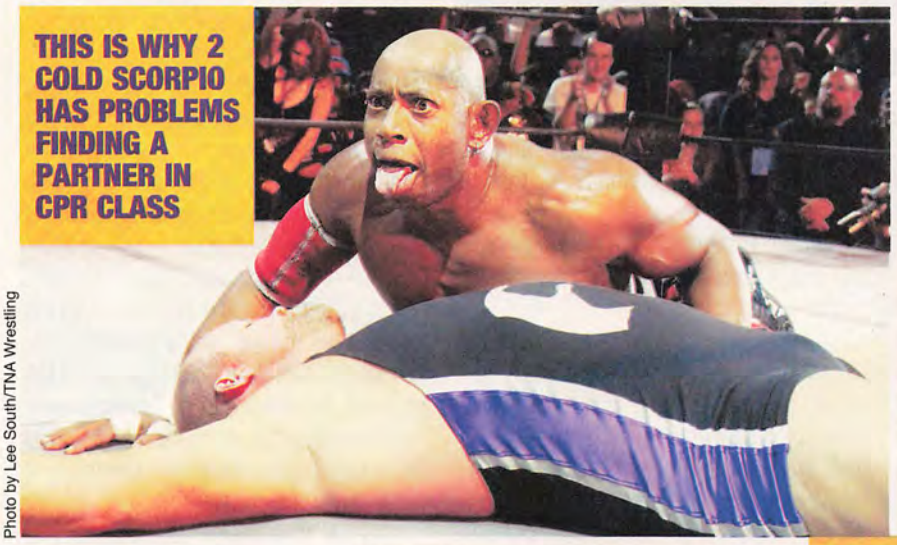

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

THE MASK WAS THE PINATA'S IDEA ... IT DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO RECOGNIZE IT ASSOCIATING WITH ALBERT DEL RIO

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THE PEOPLE POLITELY APPLUADED WHEN BARON VON RASCHKE STOOD AND DEMONSTRATED THE IRON CLAW. BOY, DID THEY FEEL AWKWARD WHEN THEY LATER REALIZED HE WAS HAVING A HEART ATTACK

Just kidding! The Baron is in good health. In fact, he looks just about the same as he did in 1982 ... he was never what you'd call a looker.

PWI ACHIEVEMENT: QUOTABLES

Photo by George Napolitano

"I thought you said something about being entertaining, because that was boring. You're not funny and nobody likes you."

—CM Punk talking to The Big Show, calling it as he sees it, on the 900th edition of *Raw*

"If we're going to war, we are going to win that. To me it's not a competition anymore; this company has a better product. This company has better talent. This company produces the matches and everything that I've seen here in being around for almost a couple of months now, this company is better at everything they do. We're just going to show we're the better company with the better product. We're not going to repeat history; we're going to make history."

—Hulk Hogan, predicting a TNA victory in the new "Monday Night War" in a TNA news release

"It was ill-conceived, bad timing, it was a risk, and it was a risk that didn't pan out. I've taken plenty of risks that didn't work out, and I've taken some that have. Vince McMahon has taken some risks that worked and taken plenty of risks that haven't. The move to Monday night was a miss, and I'll take as much responsibility for that as anybody else."

—Eric Bischoff, conceding defeat, on the *Monday Night Mayhem* radio show

"You know who Superman is? Well, he's got a cape. Makes him real powerful. Do you know who Popeye is? He's got the can of spinach. Makes him real, real strong ... Do you know what this is? This is Hulk Hogan's Hall of Fame ring. This is my life. This is the only thing that never left me ... Put your hand out. This is yours. This will give you the power of the universe. This will make you the strongest mortal man on the earth."

—Hulk Hogan, presenting Abyss with his WWE Hall of Fame ring on *Impact*

"I hate Vince Russo. I despise Vince Russo. I want Vince Russo to die. If I could figure out a way to murder him without going to prison, I would consider it the greatest accomplishment of my life."

—Jim Cornette in a private e-mail to TNA's head of talent relations, Terry Taylor, that would quickly become very public

"How do they get away [with] calling me an independent contractor and yet I have to sign an exclusivity contract? I can't work for anyone else. They get around paying Social Security. Why does the government let them off the hook?"

—Jesse Ventura, questioning WWE's categorization of its wrestlers as independent contractors in an interview with the *Hartford Courant*

"RVD said Jeff Hardy and him are rock stars. In my prime, I was selling out 30,000-plus seats domes. They can't draw 1,000 on the road."

—Kevin Nash, lashing out at RVD and Hardy on Twitter

"It's really good here. It's a great gig. TNA is a great place to work. Unlike WWE, which is ruled by fear, TNA is ruled by team spirit. Coming here rejuvenated a lot of my passion I had for wrestling. I want the company I work for to succeed."

—Rob Van Dam, expressing his happiness with TNA in an interview with *PWI's* Dan Murphy

"TNA doesn't have a clue how to make a star. Even if they did know how to do good television, they don't know how to market the fact that they're doing good television. And if they were marketing what they're doing now, everybody would say, 'Oh, God, this sucks. Why are you marketing this?'"

—Paul Heyman, adding grist to the rumor mill regarding him taking over

TNA Creative, in comments in the *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*

"I have been competing over 30 years and I've never been the WWE champion. And it does eat at me a little bit. Many other WWE Hall of Fame legends—Ted DiBiase, Ricky Steamboat, Jimmy Snuka, Mr. Perfect—never, ever became the WWE champion. And if you're going to do what I think you're going to do, and you're going to give that S.O.B. Wade Barrett the WWE championship without him deserving it, then what you're doing is you're spitting in the face of all those legends that you say you respect. And I'm asking you, don't you spit in my face, John Cena."

—Roddy Piper, making an impassioned plea to Cena on the November "Old School" edition of *Raw*

"There's nothing that's going to happen to me in a cage that hasn't already happened to me. I've been knocked out, I've had broken bones, I've had tendons torn, I've been beaten half to death, and usually I've volunteered for it. I love MMA. I want to support it. And I want to toss my hat in the ring."

—Former WWE star Dave Batista, in an interview with mmaprime.tv's Aaron Tru

"You want to be a professional wrestler? You want to be a man? Do you know who I am? Who am I? In your world I'm God. I'm God! I'm Ric Flair! I am wrestling. Tell your mother the greatest moment of your life ended up being the saddest second of your life."

—Ric Flair, taking offense to Jay Lethal's impression of him on *Impact*

"I knew last Sunday when I saw that shadow of your former self rise up out of that coffin, when I felt your weak grip on my throat, I knew that it was over. All the years of plotting, all the years of planning, all the years of waiting, all the years of watching in the shadows were finally at an end. I had my vengeance, the vengeance that had eluded me for so long. And now brother, the shadows in which I once labored, they're cast upon you. What was once your Holy Grail, is now my World heavyweight championship."

—Kane, gleefully outlining how his master plan came to fruition at SummerSlam, on *Smackdown*

"I might have met him once."

—Linda McMahon, commenting on the death of Lance Cade, to the *Connecticut Post*

"I've been with him on two different WWE functions where she came up to him and knew him by name. She disrespected him. She disrespected my family."

—Harley McNaught, father of Lance Cade, angrily responding to Linda McMahon's comment in theday.com

"This is about a celebration, a celebration of the past and a celebration of life. I hope it gives a lot of guys more life out there wrestling, where it shows their faces again. And again, it's just my way of saying thank you to everyone who supported us forever."

—Tommy Dreamer, explaining what he hoped to achieve with Hardcore Justice to SLAM! Wrestling

"I am the disciple. I am the chosen one. And I have sipped from the fountain of youth, the holy cup of Hulkamania. Therefore, I am and forever will be Immortal."

—Jeff Hardy, on his decision to join Immortal, on *Impact*

"Rear naked choke. Or maybe I've done the naked rear choke a few times in the bedroom with you-know."

—Jeff Jarrett with a line guaranteed to raise Kurt Angle's blood pressure during his "MMA exhibition" on *Impact*

"We've just got to get used to the fact that guys are going to leave, move on to other companies, and try to advance their careers."

—ROH owner Cary Silkin telling *PWI's* Al Castle about the importance of developing young talent and never relying on just a few proven stars

Photo by Stu Saks

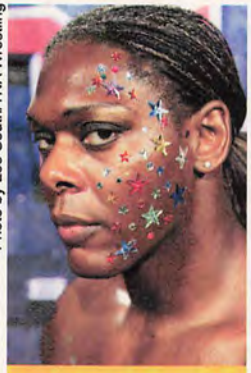
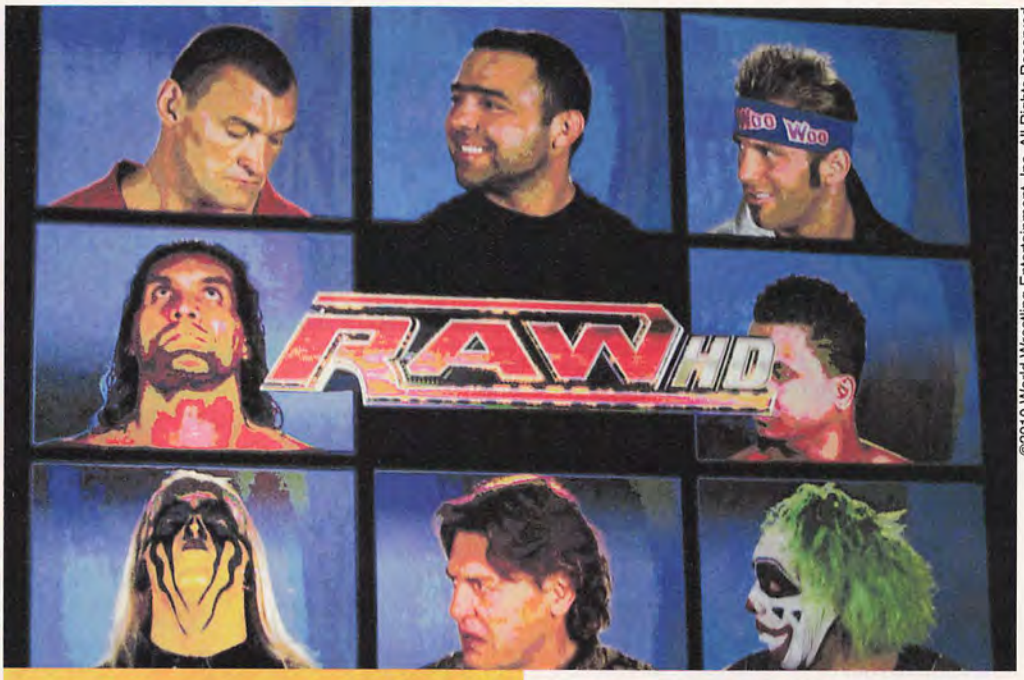


Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

ON A CLEAR DAY, YOU CAN SEE THE CONSTELLATION CASSIOPEIA

Cassiopeia: The Queen of Ethiopia. Just locate Shedir at a Right Ascension of one hour and a declination of 60 degrees. If you pass Marfak, you've gone too far.



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SADLY, NO ONE THOUGHT TO CALL ANN B. "ALICE" DAVIS TO FILL THE MIDDLE

We also would have accepted Joan Rivers, Jim J. Bullock, Martin Mull, or the ghost of Paul Lynde as a center square.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

PAYBACK

A savage attack from Abyss left Rob Van Dam suffering from severe lacerations and potential brain and spinal trauma. The injuries forced RVD to relinquish the TNA World title, but he was back in action just two months later. Shots like this would make Abyss come to regret starting a war with "The Whole F'n Show."

Photo by Matt Roberts

LITTLE KNOWN FACT: WHENEVER KOZLOV HEARS TAIO CRUZ' "DYNAMITE," HE JUST HAS TO BUST A MOVE

He's throwin' his hands and wearin' his favorite brands. Shake that booty, Vlad.

STEVIE RICHARDS WOULD HAVE TO USE THE SPRAY BOTTLE TO CURB TOMMY DREAMER'S EMBARRASSING HUMPING HABIT. DOWN BOY!

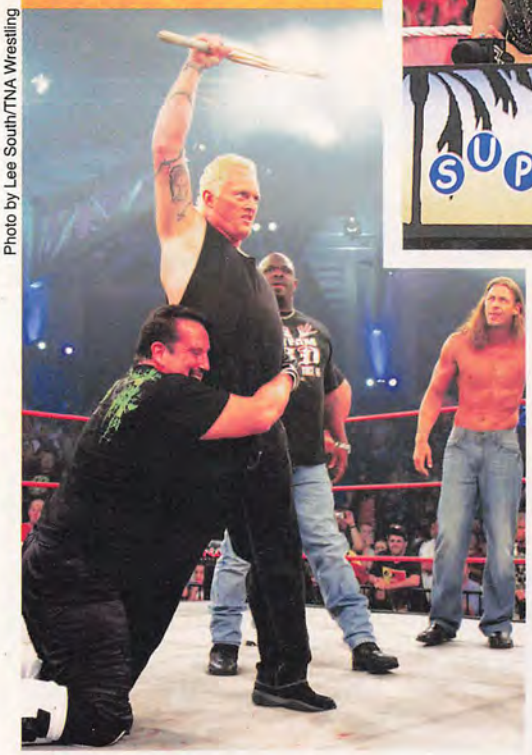

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

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BECAUSE IF THERE'S ONE GUY EMINENTLY QUALIFIED TO DISCOVER WRESTLING TALENT, IT'S THE GUY WHO PLAYED HANUKKAH HARRY

Jon Lovitz' playful flirtation with The Bella Twins fizzled when he realized Nikki and Brie were only three years old when he was a star on *Saturday Night Live*. Time to play the "I-Know-Adam-Sandler" card, Jon.

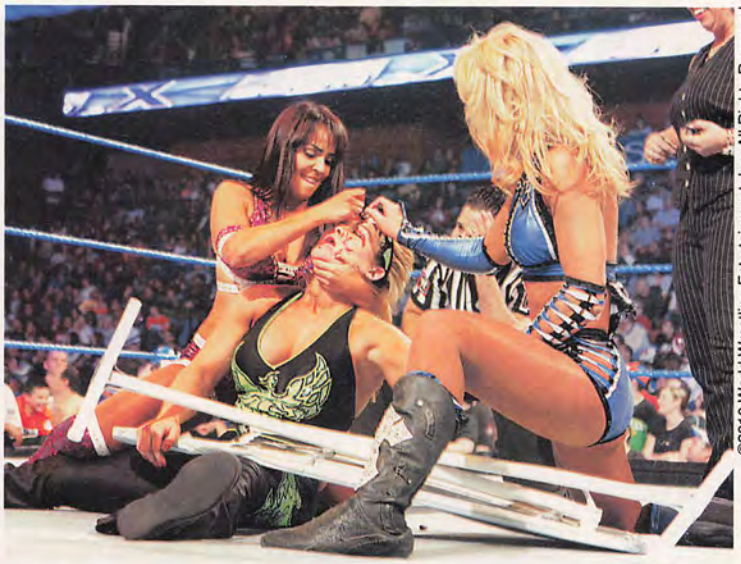
Photo by Wayne McCarty

Photo by Wayne McCarty

TWO REASONS WHY NO ONE IS CLAMORING FOR AN AWA REUNION

Greg Gagne has lost some of the spring from his dropkick. As for wrestling's original rock-and-roller, Buck Zumhofe (left), we doubt that even Mrs. Zumhofe wants to see this much of him.

Photo by George Tahinos



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BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, UGLY TACTICS

Michelle McCool and Layla tried to humiliate Beth Phoenix with this "extreme makeover," but "The Glamazon" was the one who left Extreme Rules with the WWE Women's title.

THIS IS WHY MOST WRESTLERS KEEP A CHIROPRACTOR ON SPEED-DIAL

Rob Van Dam may have missed wrestling, but we have a feeling he didn't miss getting dropped on his head.

Photo by George Napolitano

IN THE SPOTLIGHTS ... LITERALLY

It's a good thing Evan Bourne keeps his knees bent through his 450 splash. Otherwise, he just might get hung up on the lighting rig suspended above the ring. If he flies any higher, he's going to require a TSA pat-down.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

UPON SEEING THE SHOW LINEUP, MR. ANDERSON MOMENTARILY PANICS, FEARING HE HAS ARRIVED AT A *WCW THUNDER* TAPING

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INTRODUCING WWE CHUTES AND LADDERS

Heath Slater tries to climb the ladder while a pair of Divas enjoy their slide down the chute. What's next? Yahtzee Tatsu? Miz-opoly? Trivial Pur-Cena? By the way, a message for Eve Torres and Gail Kim: Mae Young called. She wants her 1930s-style swimsuits back.

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TWIN TATSUS

With the TitanTron image in the background, it looks like a pair of Yoshi Tatsus are about to come crashing down on Primo Colon. And to think, poor Primo had his hands full with just one!

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WHAT'S THIS? A ZOMBIE IN A WWE RING? THE LAST TIME THAT HAPPENED, THE SANDMAN CANED THE CRAP OUT OF HIM!

Alas, it wasn't the infamous ECW Zombie who appeared on a June edition of *Monday Night Raw*, but the renowned singer/director Rob Zombie. Ironically, this Zombie is more closely associated with the original ECW than the so-called ECW Zombie, considering his song "Thunderkiss '65" was ECW's unofficial theme song.

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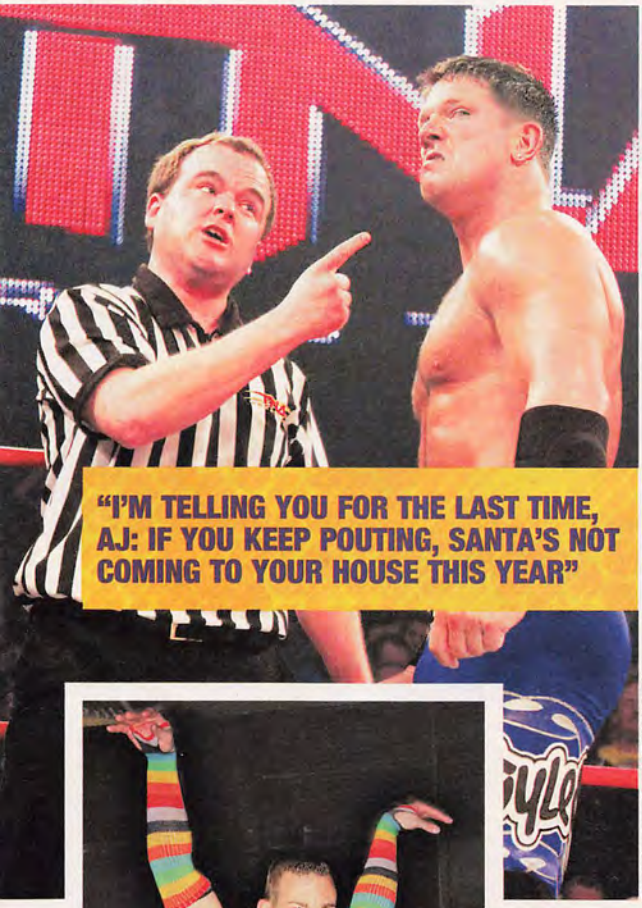

"I'M TELLING YOU FOR THE LAST TIME, AJ: IF YOU KEEP POUTING, SANTA'S NOT COMING TO YOUR HOUSE THIS YEAR"

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

ABOUT TO RECEIVE A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED GRECO-ROMAN BUTT-KICKING

Though MVP is a talented technician in his own right, he had no interest in exchanging takedowns with Jack Swagger. Amateur skills are great, but you don't learn many counters to a running kick to the face on the amateur mats.

Photo by Tim Walker

IT TAKES SOME EFFORT TO LOOK MORE FLAMBOYANT THAN COLE CALLOWAY, BUT G-FED GAVE HIM A RUN FOR HIS MONEY

As a result of their loss to Calloway and Ronnie Zukko, Team Fed Up was forced to dress like Calloway and Zukko's manager, Candy. We're pretty sure Candy would do the outfit more justice.

Photo by Tim Walker

IN MEMORIAM

COMPILED BY **THE CAULIFLOWER ALLEY CLUB**

Trent Acid
Toni Adams
Skandor Akbar
Ted Allen
J.C. Bailey
Charles Baillargeon
Andre Baker
Charles Baker
Big Mikey
Tony Borne
Cowboy Bob Bradley
Jack Brisco
Tom Burton
Lance Cade
El Hijo Del Cien Caras
Edouard Carpentier
Ed Chuman
Corsica Joe
George "Red" Eakin
El Espanto II
Chuck Etchels
La Fiera
Mickey Garagiola
Anton Geesink
Jorge González
Gorgeous George Grant
Gilbert Guerrero
Tony Halme
Bryan Hart
Blackjack Hedden
Joe Higuchi
Mr. Hito
Kantaro Hoshino
Curtis Iaukea
J.J. Jenkins
Chris Kanyon
Peggy Ann Kawa-Baker
Rusher Kimura
Gene Kiniski
Herb Larson
Jack Laskin
Kenneth Laymon
Beverly Lehmer
Chris Long
Moose Mahoney
Georgiann Makropoulos
Ida Mae Martinez
Ron Martinez
Ike Masarsky
Jet Monroe
Rocket Monroe
Randy Morse
Hans Mortier
Gran Naniwa
Jose Nieves
Nick Pacchiano
Angelo Poffo
Mike Porter
Jack Savage
Baron Mikel Scicluna
El Scorpio
Sandy Scott
Screamer
Mike Shaw
Katsuhisa Shibata
Kenji Shibuya
Grizzly Smith
Steve Stack
Steve Stanlee
El Supremo
Tiny Tim
Luna Vachon
Jerry Valiant
Jason Viera
Arpad Weber
Jim White
Jeremy Wood
Kotetsu Yamamoto
Skip Young

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PWI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

SECTION BY **DAN MURPHY**

THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL League has the Super Bowl. The NHL has the Stanley Cup, MLB has the World Series. Hollywood has the Academy Awards. Music has the Grammys.

Most other forms of sports and entertainment recognize some sort of annual awards system. In some fashion, the top performer rises through the field and is acknowledged as the best by his peers, the media, and fans.

In one of a myriad ways in which professional wrestling is unlike any other form of sport or entertainment, wrestling at one point had no equivalent of a year-end finale or Academy Award. All wrestling had were championship belts, which changed hands year-round, in dozens of regional territories throughout the United States.

In 1972, the publishers of this magazine sought to rectify that situation and the annual Achievement Awards were created. That year, we honored the cream of the crop in an assortment of categories, including Wrestler of the Year (Pedro Morales), Tag Team of the Year (Bruiser & Crusher), and Match of the Year (a 22-man battle royal—a rarity for the time—won by Bruno Sammartino). We also recognized some other categories that have since been discontinued, such as Manager of the Year (Bobby Heenan) and Midget of the Year (Little Bruiser).

The Achievement Awards were unique because the fans themselves decided them, not an academy of insiders of a cabal of elitist sportswriters. Anyone who snipped a ballot from the pages of a magazine and sent it in had their say.

Wrestling has changed a great deal since 1972, but the *PWI* Achievement Awards have remained as a reliable way to encapsulate the great matches and wrestlers from a given year and preserve them from one year to the next. By paging through the Achievement Awards' "Superstats" compendium of winners, it is possible to compare the greats of 2010 to the greats of 1972 ... or 1982 or 1992. In addition to honoring this year's award winners, the Achievement Awards invite discussion and debate, and they help place the events of the past year into a sort of historical perspective. Is 2010's Wrestler of the Year, Randy Orton, better than the 1982 winner, Bob Backlund? We'll leave that for you to decide.

As always, this year's Achievement Awards provide fodder for discussion and analysis. Orton earned his second consecutive Wrestler of the Year award and went from being the Most Hated wrestler of 2009 to being the Most Popular Wrestler of 2010. Michelle McCool followed her controversial selection in the 2010 "*PWI* Female 50" with an equally controversial win as Woman of the Year. Shawn Michaels proved he was still "The Showstopper" by earning his seventh consecutive Match of the Year award.

While our Achievement Awards are decided by fan vote, each year the editors select one recipient of the Stanley Weston Award, honoring an individual for his or her collective contributions to professional wrestling. This year, we posthumously honor Walter "Killer" Kowalski, a fierce villain inside the ring, and a good-hearted, well-respected gentleman outside of the ring.

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

When David Otunga first arrived in WWE, he may as well have been called "Mr. Jennifer Hudson." Every time he was featured in an interview or made his way to the ring, we were reminded of his relationship with the Oscar-winning star of *Dreamgirls*. We were also reminded that he was a former reality TV star, appearing on the second season of VH-1's *I Love New York*.

Otunga bragged about his Hollywood connections and presented himself as a big star that was set to take over WWE. During the first season of *NXT*, Otunga had a bit of humility beaten into him. He became frustrated with his *NXT* mentor, R-Truth, and eventually lost the competition to Wade Barrett.

Despite all of Otunga's bravado and alleged Hollywood connections, the fact of the matter was that he wasn't quite ready to dominate WWE. At times, he looked clumsy and uncomfortable in the ring. His execution was mediocre, and he occasionally seemed flustered. Turns out becoming a WWE wrestler is a bit harder than it looks.

But, to his credit, Otunga has steadily improved since his WWE debut in February. Though he doesn't exactly seem happy to be taking orders from Barrett, Otunga seems much more comfortable in the ring. He has toned down his Hollywood attitude and seems to have focused on improving his wrestling abilities. By the end of the year, he had managed to win the WWE tag team title with John Cena, and even scored a singles win over Edge in a lumberjack match (thanks to an assist by Kane).

Otunga may not have achieved the level of success he predicted on *NXT*, but he has made a major impact over the past year. If he continues to improve at the same rate he has over the past 10 months, it's entirely possible that he might be contending for a WWE championship. Not bad, considering he had never stepped into a ring before mid-2009.

In earlier years, the Rookie of the Year award went to a wrestler who seemed poised to accomplish wrestling superstardom. Ric Flair, Bob Backlund, Rick Steamboat, Steve Austin, and Kurt Angle all won this award. In recent years, however, some unorthodox competitors have earned Rookie of the Year honors, including Hornswoggle, The Boogeyman, and Zach Gowen. Otunga may not be in the Hall of Fame class, but he's certainly a more deserving winner than some of those one-dimensional flash-in-the-pans. After all, he has already headlined WWE pay-per-views (albeit in multiple-man tag matches) and won a tag title. A break with Nexus and a feud with Barrett might just put him on the path to world championship glory in 2011.

RUNNERS-UP

TAMINA (18 percent)

First Runner-Up: The daughter of "Superfly" Jimmy Snuka helped The Usos become one of the top tag teams in WWE in 2010. Though she hasn't wrestled many singles matches to date, Tamina has looked extremely impressive in six-person bouts against The Hart Dynasty and Natalya and promises to become a major player in the women's division in 2011. She is a powerful brawler with a championship pedigree and a deadly aerial attack. She is a rising star as a wrestler as well as an accomplished valet and manager.

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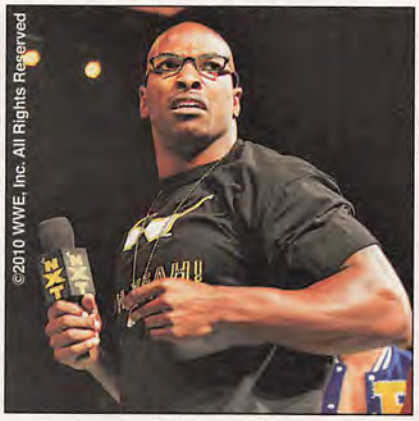
PERCY WATSON (15 percent)

Second Runner-Up: The former NFL linebacker joined Florida Championship Wrestling in September 2009. Less than a year later, he was competing in WWE as part of *NXT* Season Two. With MVP as his Pro, Watson garnered some attention with his trademark glasses, flamboyant dances, and off-the-wall personality. It wasn't enough for him to win *NXT*, but it was certainly enough to make him stand out from the crowd. He hasn't been seen in WWE since *NXT* Season Two ended, but with his infectious personality, he's bound to show up again soon.



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COREY HOLLIS (9 percent)

Third Runner-Up: Hollis has been turning heads on the independent circuit, wrestling for various NWA promotions, as well as Great Championship Wrestling and Global Championship Wrestling. He received strong support form the Internet wrestling community, particularly NWA fans that raved about his matches against Stony Hooker and Mike Posey. Hollis won praise for his precision counter-wrestling, fluid aerial attacks, a crisp execution of moves, and a submission repertoire that belies his inexperience. He is definitely a young wrestler to watch.

Photo by Bill Behrens

VOTES FOR OTHERS (33 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Jackson Andrews, Aksana, Eli Cottonwood, Naomi Night, and Conrad Tanner.

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INSPIRATIONAL

This year's Most Inspirational Wrestler spent the past nine months of the year in retirement and *still* managed to win this award by a comfortable margin.

Shawn Michaels didn't need to challenge The Undertaker to a rematch at WrestleMania. He may have been disappointed by the result of his WrestleMania 25 clash with "The Dead Man," but the loss didn't hurt Michaels' legacy one iota. He was still "The Showstopper," the man many consider to be the best all-around performer of his generation.

But the same pride that drove him to be the best compelled him to challenge Undertaker to a rematch. Undertaker tried to decline, but Michaels was persistent. Finally, Undertaker relented on the condition that Michaels agree to put his career on the line and retire if he lost.

Michaels hesitated for just a moment and then accepted the stipulation. "If I can't beat The Undertaker," he said, "then I have no career."

At WrestleMania 26, Michaels and The Undertaker wrestled another classic. Michaels pushed 'Taker to the limit and managed to summon up the willpower and determination to get back to his feet after taking each of The Undertaker's signature finishing moves. In the end, even that wasn't enough. Even as The Undertaker pleaded with Michaels to stay down, Michaels climbed back to his feet and continued to fight, forcing The Undertaker's hand. With one final Tombstone, Michaels' 26-year wrestling career came to a close.

In addition to his last stand against The Undertaker, Michaels also showed maturity and class in making peace with Bret "The Hitman" Hart. For nearly 14 years, Hart and Michaels have maintained a deep and personal grudge. But when Hart extended his hand to Michaels in friendship, Michaels didn't respond with the sophomoric attitude or innuendo of the D-X era. He surprised Hart with an embrace, and then left the ring, allowing Hart to enjoy the moment with the fans.

Michaels exited wrestling with grace, dignity, and class. His final match was one of the most memorable of his career. He lost … and he walked away without regret. And unlike Ric Flair (the man Michaels supposedly forced into retirement at WrestleMania 24), it looks as if Michaels' retirement will be permanent.

For many of our respondents, voting for Michaels was a way to say goodbye to a bigger-than-life performer, and another honor to bestow on "The Heartbreak Kid."

Let's face it. Michaels hasn't always been an altar boy. There have been times when he's been tasteless and unprofessional. But in 2010, he conducted himself as a gentleman, a sportsman, and—dare we say it—a role model. He will always be "The Showstopper."

RUNNERS-UP

KURT ANGLE (9 percent)

First Runner-Up: Angle has been taking shortcuts for years, but in 2010, the Olympic gold medalist finally started standing on his own two feet. He went back to basics and elevated his game, outwrestling opponents instead of relying on superfluous interference or other rulebreaking tactics. When AJ Styles refused to grant him another title shot, Angle decided to start at the bottom of the TNA rankings and steadily work his way back up the ladder of contention. He also began wearing a set of dog tags to show support for U.S. Armed Forces.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

JOHN CENA (7 percent)

Second Runner-Up: Cena's personal credo is "Hustle, Loyalty, And Respect." In 2010, Cena was forced to put his convictions to the ultimate test. All he had to do was, as referee, allow Wade Barrett to beat Randy Orton at the Survivor Series to keep his job (and perhaps even get an eventual title shot against Barrett). Instead, Cena called the match down the middle … and it cost him his job. At least Cena can sleep at night knowing he didn't prostitute his morals. He's a man of integrity and honor, and he's a great ambassador for wrestling.

Photo by George Napolitano

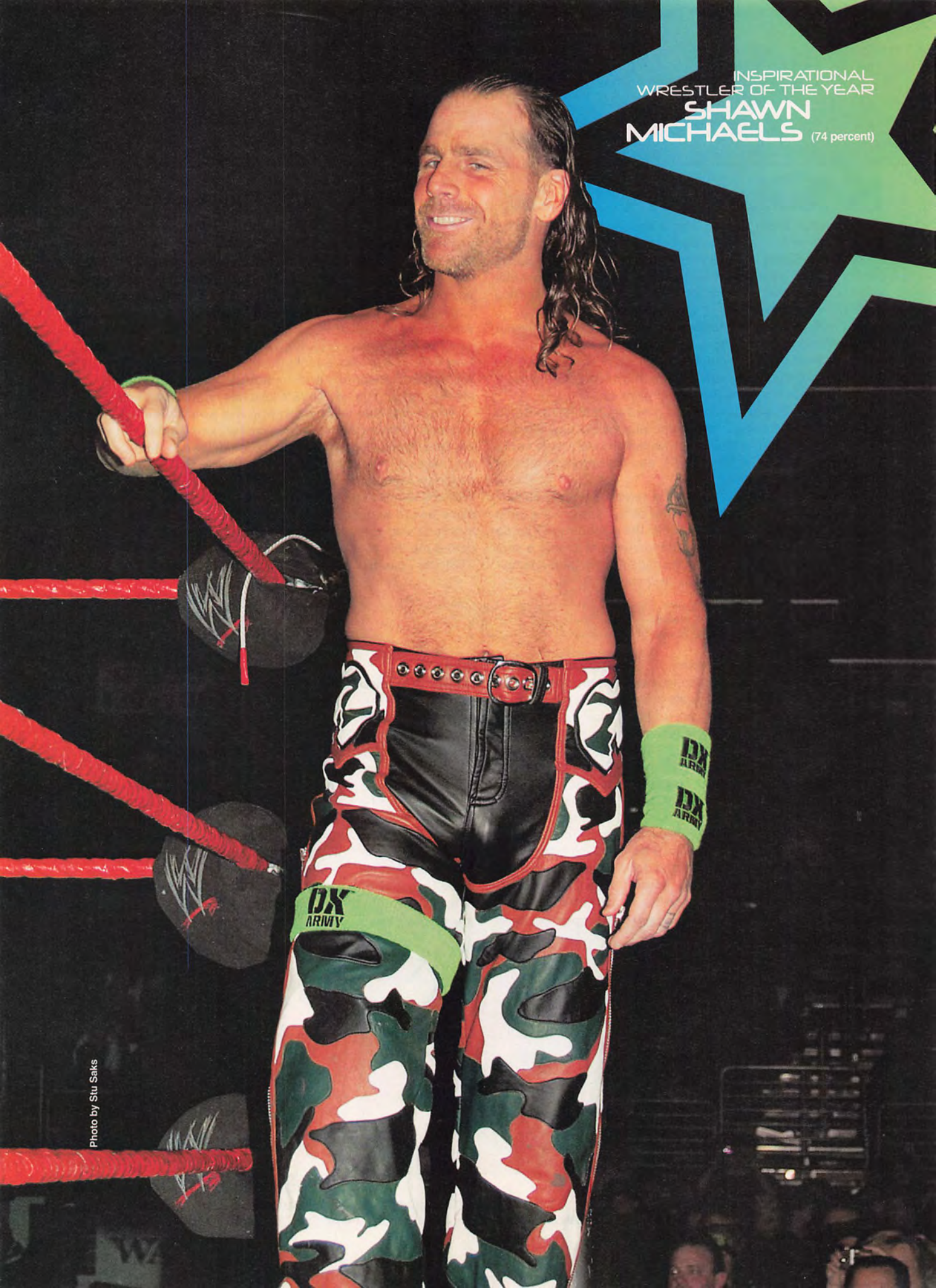
ROB VAN DAM (6 percent)

Third Runner-Up: Van Dam never set out to be the savior of TNA. He just wanted to wrestle, and TNA presented the right opportunity. Van Dam quickly won the World title and became the new flag-bearer for the company. He took a savage beating from Abyss and rebounded, returning to the ring and extracting bloody vengeance on his tormentor. He stood up to Immortal and stood alongside his EV2.0 teammates through bitter victories and crushing defeats. Through a tumultuous year, Van Dam persevered, and he did it with class.

Photo by George Tahinos

VOTES FOR OTHERS (4 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Awesome Kong, Evan Bourne, Daniel Bryan, El Generico, La Parka, Angelina Love, and Rey Mysterio Jr.



INSPIRATIONAL WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

SHAWN MICHAELS (74 percent)

Photo by Stu Saks

MOST IMPROVED

There has been a buzz about the man now known as D'Angelo Dinero for several years now. When he was competing as Elijah Burke in Ohio Valley Wrestling in 2004, industry observers and WWE talent scouts were impressed by his athleticism, quickness, and charisma. He was a natural talker and a workhorse of a wrestler.

Burke was eventually called up to the main WWE roster and assigned to ECW, where he led the New Breed faction in a feud against the ECW Originals. But ECW was never quite the right fit for Burke. He was discarded by WWE and he went home to assess his wrestling career choices.

Thankfully, TNA was willing to give him a chance. Burke started fresh, assuming a new name and a bold new identity. As "The Pope" D'Angelo Dinero, he developed a new confidence. He was free to be himself, and he began to let that charisma shine through.

Though he debuted in TNA as a rulebreaker, he quickly won over the fans and became one of the company's most popular competitors by feuding with the unpopular Orlando Jordan. He won the Eight-Card Stud tournament to earn a shot at the TNA World title, and even managed to pin then-champion AJ Styles in a non-title match on *Impact*.

"The Pope" came up a little bit short in his title match against Styles at Lockdown, but he proved he was a viable World title contender and a force to be reckoned with in TNA.

"A lot of people say that TNA hasn't been able to create any new stars, but I think 'The Pope' is a perfect example of a superstar that TNA has been able to cultivate and develop," wrote Lisa McDermott of Boulder, Colorado. "'Pope' has flourished in TNA. A year ago, he was losing matches to Suicide. Now he's one of TNA's most popular wrestlers, feuding with Abyss, Eric Bischoff, and Immortal. That's a heck of an improvement." Indeed, WWE's loss has been TNA's gain.

When informed that he had won this award, Dinero said it was one of the highlights of his career, and wanted to thank the fans that voted for him. "This really means the world to me," he said. "I used to read *PWI* religiously as a kid, and I still do today. I remember guys like Curt Hennig, Sting, and Steve Williams winning this award back in the day, and to receive the same award as those legends is a true honor. Thank you to everyone who voted for me, and for all the fans who have supported me this year. I promise I'll continue to improve and do whatever I can to win the TNA World title in 2011."

RUNNERS-UP

WADE BARRETT (17 percent)

First Runner-Up: Though he was cast as a rookie on *NXT*, Barrett had actually been wrestling for more than five years. He competed in England, and had some recent success in both OVW and FCW Barrett was an impressive physical specimen, but was still largely undeveloped. Since joining WWE, he has improved tremendously, developing from a green tag team wrestler into the top heel in WWE. He is an intelligent competitor who knows how to control a match and avoid unnecessary risks. And having some friends run interference doesn't hurt, either.

Photo by George Napolitano

SHEAMUS (16 percent)

Second Runner-Up: Last year, Sheamus' tables match victory over John Cena was widely considered an upset. Many people thought Cena had slipped off the ropes and that Sheamus had won the title on a fluke. Since then, the 2010 King of the Ring has scored wins over several top stars. The two-time WWE champ has proven that he is the real deal. Sheamus has manhandled some of the biggest names in WWE, rocking them with knee strikes and forearm smashes before putting them away with his High Cross drop or his brutal Brogue Kick. No one calls Sheamus a fluke anymore.

Photo by George Napolitano

JAY LETHAL (6 percent)

Third Runner-Up: It's not that Lethal appreciably "improved" over the past year. He just reminded people just how good he can be when he's not clowning around. Lethal got serious this year and achieved a personal milestone by beating his childhood hero, Ric Flair. He also had an impressive X division title reign. When Lethal is focused, he is one of the most dynamic and athletic young wrestlers in TNA—just ask Kurt Angle, who was cleanly pinned by Lethal a few years back. Dropping the silliness and concentrating on wrestling was the right move.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

VOTES FOR OTHERS (41 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Evan Bourne, El Generico, Luke Gallows, Matt Morgan, Cody Rhodes, Velvet Sky, Doug Williams, and Dolph Ziggler.

MOST IMPROVED WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

D'ANGELO DINERO (20 percent)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

COMEBACK

When Rob Van Dam left WWE three years ago, most analysts and fans expected he would either jump to TNA or return to WWE in short order. The days stretched into weeks, then months, then years. Other than some sporadic appearances overseas, Van Dam had vanished off the radar completely. It was beginning to look like one of wrestling's most thrilling and controversial performers of the past decade was easing into a quiet retirement.

Fortunately, Hulk Hogan was able to re-ignite RVD's passion for wrestling and bring him back to the national stage.

On March 8, Van Dam made a stunning debut on a special Monday night edition of *Impact*, defeating a shocked Sting in a matter of seconds. You may think that a certain amount of ring rust might accumulate after wrestling just a handful of matches in three years time, but Van Dam looked like he had never stopped wrestling. Barely five weeks after his TNA debut, he beat Jeff Hardy in a number-one contenders match, then went on to beat AJ Styles that same night to win the TNA World championship.

In a matter of weeks, Van Dam had gone from a quiet life in Southern California to becoming the new face of TNA wrestling.

"This is a no-brainer pick," wrote Rod Foran of Palm Bay, Florida. "Not only did Van Dam return to win a major world title, but he also spearheaded the return of EV2.0 and established himself as TNA's top babyface for the year. Sure, other wrestlers came back from serious injuries or had a good year after some mediocre years, but RVD changed the complexion of TNA."

Paul Carolan of Lexington, Kentucky, concurred. "I had forgotten how much I missed seeing RVD in action until he came back," Carolan wrote. "He has a unique presence and energy that wrestling has lacked for a long time. His comeback was one of the top five wrestling stories of 2010, as far as I'm concerned."

Van Dam's title reign would end after four months, courtesy of a savage attack by Abyss. Due to injuries received in that attack, Van Dam was forced to relinquish the World championship. However, after sustaining severe lacerations and injuries TNA reported as spinal trauma and possible brain damage, Van Dam made a second comeback. Fewer than two months after the attack, Van Dam was back in the ring, looking superb in matches against Abyss.

Van Dam is passionate about wrestling again. He's in dogged pursuit of the World title he never lost and he has become one of TNA's top stars. That's good for RVD, and it's good for wrestling.

RUNNERS-UP

KANE (15 percent)

First Runner-Up: "The Big Red Machine" had the most successful year of his career. Not only did he finally regain a World championship after a 12-year drought (*PWI* did not recognize the ECW title as a world championship during his reign), but he also unveiled his "master plan" and drove The Undertaker out of WWE ... for the time being, at least. Kane scored some big wins over 'Taker, made peace with Paul Bearer, and bested his brother in a Buried Alive match. He has developed into one of the most dominating champions Smackdown has seen since Brock Lesnar.

Photo by Duane Long

EDGE (11 percent)

Second Runner-Up: Back in January, it looked like Edge had this award locked up. He had returned to the ring several months earlier than expected after suffering a torn Achilles tendon and managed to win the 2010 Royal Rumble in dramatic fashion. He rode that momentum into a featured match at WrestleMania, where he challenged former partner Chris Jericho for the World title. Unfortunately, Edge lost that match, and a lot of his momentum evaporated. A heel turn and a jump to Raw didn't pan out, but the jump back to Smackdown got him back on track late in the year.

Photo by George Napolitano

JEFF HARDY (9 percent)

Third Runner-Up: Like Rob Van Dam, Hardy made a surprising TNA debut on a special Monday night edition of *Impact* (January 4). But while RVD skyrocketed to the World title, Hardy floundered for several months. It wasn't until he turned his back on the fans and relied on the interference of Eric Bischoff that he was able to get his hands on the TNA World title. As the self-proclaimed "Antichrist Of Professional Wrestling," Hardy has himself a new belt, but he has lost many of the fans that adored him for the past decade.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

VOTES FOR OTHERS (39 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Mr. Anderson, Ezekiel Jackson, Angelina Love, Melina, Tara, and The Undertaker.

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

ROB VAN DAM (26 percent)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Despite the requests of Lay-Cool, we are not issuing Woman of the Year Achievement Award plaques to both members. Michelle McCool earned the award on her own. McCool was voted third runner-up in both 2008 and 2009. She established herself as the favorite to win this award early in 2010 and kept her momentum all year long, giving her the win over some tough competition.

For the period of November 30, 2009 through November 30, 2010, McCool held (or co-held) either the WWE Women's or WWE Divas championships for 308 of 365 days. That is an incredible accomplishment and worthy of Woman of the Year recognition.

Though McCool lost the Women's title to Mickie James at the Royal Rumble, she won it back less than a month later. She also dropped that championship to Beth Phoenix, but the belt came back to Lay-Cool when Layla pinned Phoenix in a handicap match. To solidify her claim to the championship, McCool defeated Melina at Night of the Champions to unify the Women's and Divas titles.

Natalya finally captured the belt in a handicap match against Lay-Cool, but she did so nine days before the voting deadline, and a last-minute surge could not even get her runner-up status.

McCool has taken a lot of flack from critics. Some people call her overrated or question her wrestling abilities. She has been accused of copying The Beautiful People (a charge she flatly denies). When she was named the top woman in the 2010 PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED "Female 50," it set off a firestorm of controversy, angry e-mails, and critical blog posts. There's no question that McCool is a lightning rod for controversy.

But there's also no question that she has had the most success of any female wrestler throughout 2010. And that's why more than one in five respondents cast their vote for the leader of Lay-Cool ... even if they did it grudgingly.

"I'm not a big fan of McCool, but she *did* manage to beat Mickie James, Melina, and Eve Torres this year, and she stayed on top almost till the end of the year," wrote Justin Costello of Kingsport, Tennessee. "Mickie James, Angelina Love, and Madison Rayne all had some good moments, but McCool had a better year overall."

Surprisingly, McCool's Lay-Cool teammate, Layla, received less than three percent of the vote, a clear indicator that our respondents see McCool as the true captain of the team.

A vocal minority of our respondents indicated that they were not impressed with the overall quality of women's wrestling in WWE and TNA and cast their vote for women of the independent circuit, leading to impressive showings from SHIMMER champion Madison Eagles (6 percent) and Women Superstars Uncensored champion Mercedes Martinez (5 percent).

RUNNERS-UP

ANGELINA LOVE (17 percent)

First Runner-Up: Always a bridesmaid, never a bride. Earlier this year, Love took the number-two spot in the *PWI* "Female 50," behind McCool. Once again, Love came close, only to fall short to McCool. Love may not have taken the Achievement Award, but she had a very impressive year regardless. She won the Knockouts title three times, making her the most prolific Knockouts champion in TNA history. She also reformed The Beautiful People with Velvet Sky and established herself as the gold standard of the Knockouts division.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

MADISON RAYNE (10 percent)

Second Runner-Up: It happened slowly but surely. Rayne went from being the odd woman out in The Beautiful People to becoming the dominant woman in the group. In fact, Rayne was so impressive as the year went on that when Mickie James debuted in TNA, she mistakenly referred to Rayne as the Knockouts champion, even though Love had the title. James must have had ESP, because Rayne "won" the belt from Tara a couple of weeks later. The three-time Knockouts champion had a breakout year. Having Tara in her corner makes her more dangerous than ever.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

MADISON EAGLES (6 percent)

Third Runner-Up: The 6'1" Australian made a big splash when she defeated MsChif to end her nearly two-year SHIMMER title reign. Eagles' win over MsChif firmly established her as one of the most formidable women wrestlers in the world. The four-time former IWA Women's champion is known for her willingness to brawl as well as for her technical prowess, Eagles is a veritable total package. When she soars from the top rope, she looks less like an eagle and more like a massive condor swooping in for the kill.

Photo by George Tahinos

VOTES FOR OTHERS (45 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Dixie Carter, Sara Del Rey, Mickie James, Kelly Kelly, Layla El, Mercedes Martinez, Melina, MsChif, Natalya, and Tara.

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FEUD OF THE YEAR ★★★★★

When Wade Barrett and his fellow *NXT* Season One contenders encircled John Cena and attacked like a pack of hyenas, the so-called "Rookies" sent a very clear message to the WWE Universe: We're not playing games anymore.

NXT was an interesting concept. Eight wrestlers from WWE's developmental system were invited to compete for a spot on the main roster and a guaranteed pay-per-view title shot. Along the way, the contestants were tested, taunted, demeaned, and maligned. They were judged by a biased panel of "Pros" and eliminated, one by one. It's easy to see how they could become resentful, both of the Pros and the fans who took delight in their travails.

Barrett galvanized that group of eight contenders into a dedicated force of foot soldiers. Barrett convinced them that there was force in numbers and that, as a unit, they were far greater than eight individual WWE wannabes. The *NXT* competition beat the confidence out of them. Barrett restored that confidence and gave them purpose.

By attacking Cena, The Nexus wasn't declaring war on the WWE champion; they were declaring war on the establishment that Cena represented. Barrett proclaimed "You're either Nexus or you're against us," drawing unmistakable battle lines. Over the next several months, Barrett and Nexus got the best of Cena and attacked other WWE stars with impunity. Barrett positioned himself as one of WWE's top young stars, and Nexus became the most feared stable in WWE.

Nexus also attacked Vince McMahon, Bret Hart, Randy Orton, Rick Steamboat, and The Undertaker at various times during the year. Instead of competing against one another to earn a single roster spot, the newcomers ganged up in an effort to take over WWE.

The feud between Nexus and WWE has gone on for more months and shows no sign of abating. It has crossed brand lines, with Nexus invading Smackdown several times. The Cena-led Team WWE scored a major victory over Nexus in the main event of SummerSlam, but Nexus quickly rebounded from that loss. Barrett even managed to acquire the services of his top rival by forcing Cena to become a reluctant member of Nexus in a plot designed to help Barrett capture the WWE championship.

"No other feud this year had the far-reaching ramifications that Nexus vs. WWE did," wrote Jim Schihl of Dayton, Ohio. "This was WWE's top feud for the second half of the year, and it featured some of the most memorable moments of the year."

Due to the multiple-man nature of this feud, the editors of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED made an editorial decision to include votes made for John Cena vs. Wade Barrett and Randy Orton vs. Wade Barrett in the Nexus vs. WWE totals, as those individual feuds were part of the overall Nexus invasion.

RUNNERS-UP ★★★★★★★★★★

BRET HART vs. VINCE McMAHON (18 percent)

First Runner-Up: Thirteen years ago, could anyone possibly have predicted that Vince McMahon vs. Bret Hart would take First Runner-Up in the Feud of the Year voting? Hart thought he was returning to WWE to gain a measure of peace with McMahon. McMahon responded by kicking him in the groin. What followed was the most lopsided 'Mania match since The Red Rooster beat Bobby Heenan. Hart beat McMahon to a pulp before applying the Sharpshooter. This time, Vince screwed Vince.

KURT ANGLE vs. MR. ANDERSON (17 percent)

Second Runner-Up: The feud between Anderson and Angle wasn't just a clash between two men jockeying for a TNA World title shot. It turned into a personal vendetta about respect. Anderson took this rivalry to a new level when he stole a set of dog tags presented to Angle by a war vet and used them as a weapon against him. Angle was infuriated by the disrespect Anderson showed to the military and dedicated his matches against Anderson to the Armed Forces.

JOHN CENA vs. BATISTA (11 percent)

Third Runner-Up: Batista promised that "bad things" would happen when he met Cena in the ring at WrestleMania. Instead, Cena finally got the monkey off his back and scored a decisive win over Batista in a memorable WrestleMania bout. Cena followed up that win by beating "The Animal" in a last-man-standing match at Extreme Rules, then he made Batista say, "I Quit" at Over the Limit. Cena proved his dominance over a man whose career had paralleled his own in many ways.

VOTES FOR OTHERS (32 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Abyss vs. Rob Van Dam, Kurt Angle vs. AJ Styles, Edge vs. Chris Jericho, Fortune vs. EV2.0, The Miz vs. Daniel Bryan, CM Punk vs. Rey Mysterio Jr., and The Undertaker vs. Kane.

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MOST POPULAR

Randy Orton has made history.

For the first time in the 29-year history of the *PWI* Achievement Awards, a wrestler who earned Most Hated honors one year has bounced back to be named the Most Popular Wrestler of the Year for the following year. A turn against Hulk Hogan took Randy Savage from the Most Popular perch to the Most Hated doghouse in the1988 fan poll, but never before has a wrestler gone from being the most despised man in the game to WWE's most popular attraction as quickly as Orton has this year.

When voting opened, three-time Most Popular winner John Cena shot out to an early lead, but his forced allegiance to Wade Barrett and Nexus caused support for Cena to wane, and—coupled with the passionate anti-Cena fans who voice their displeasure with Cena each year—allowed last year's Most Hated wrestler to overtake him in the final two weeks of the voting period.

The most surprising aspect of Orton's popularity is that there is no one moment that crystallized his ascent to fan favorite. In fact, for the most part, Orton's attitude and wrestling style have changed very little since last year. He never had an epiphany that caused him to change his outlook on life. He never even made a clean break with his Legacy cronies, Ted DiBiase Jr. and Cody Rhodes. Instead, that group faltered and crumbled in a slow collapse throughout the first months of 2010.

Orton's transformation was untraditional, but it was undeniable. From spring through summer, the ovations for Orton grew louder and louder in arenas across the country until it became clear that he was routinely receiving the loudest fan reactions of anyone on the Raw brand.

Without having Rhodes and DiBiase to run interference for him, Orton was forced to rely on his formidable wrestling abilities, reminding fans of the skills he showcased when he became the youngest world champion in WWE history back in 2004. He proved himself in feuds against Jack Swagger, Edge, and Sheamus en route to winning his seventh WWE World title.

Somewhere along the way, he managed to make fans forget that he was also the guy who spent 2009 punting opponents in the head and DDT'ing Stephanie McMahon.

"What I like about Randy Orton is that he doesn't make apologies and he doesn't pander to the audience," wrote Josh Battaglia of Roanoke, Virginia. "I cheer for Orton because I respect him, not because WWE's marketing department is pushing him down my throat."

"Orton is a modern-day Steve Austin," wrote James Carney of New Haven, Connecticut. "Austin was the 'Rattlesnake.' Orton is the 'Viper.' And, just like with Austin, he brings an element of unpredictability and excitement that keeps me tuning in."

RUNNERS-UP

JOHN CENA (26 percent)

First Runner-Up: Long the moral compass of WWE, Cena encountered a conundrum when he was forced into joining The Nexus. While many respondents were impressed by Cena's "Never Give Up" attitude, some voiced their disappointment that Cena did not do more to stand up to Barrett and Nexus. "Cena should never have accepted that stipulation and gotten into that mess," wrote David Stack of St. Catharines, Ontario. "He played right into Nexus' hands." Unfortunately, Cena's counter-plan to Nexus came to fruition as the voting deadline came to a close.

ROB VAN DAM (13 percent)

Second Runner-Up: With the rulebreaking turns of Hulk Hogan, Jeff Jarrett, Jeff Hardy, and AJ Styles, TNA had few heroes in 2010. At least Rob Van Dam stayed consistent. The ECW pioneer made a huge splash, winning the World title just a few months after his TNA debut, and coming back from a career-threatening mauling to battle against Immortal. And despite reports that Hogan (who had talked RVD out of semi-retirement earlier in the year) has been knocking at his door to present an invitation to the Immortal party, RVD has not answered. The man has a conscience, which our readers appreciate.

DANIEL BRYAN (5 percent)

Third Runner-Up: For a guy Michael Cole derides as bland and boring, Daniel Bryan received a surprising amount of support in the Most Popular balloting. Many respondents who cast their votes for Bryan indicated that they have been following his career for years and were happy to see his perseverance and dedication to his craft rewarded in WWE. In a world of hype and trash-talk, Bryan's unassuming persona and back-to-basics approach are a welcome change. Bryan has become the standard-bearer of old-fashioned, no-gimmicks needed wrestling. We can all get behind that, can't we?

Photo by George Napolitano

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

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VOTES FOR OTHERS (26 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Kurt Angle, Evan Bourne, Edge, Kofi Kingston, John Morrison, Rey Mysterio Jr., and The Undertaker.

MOST POPULAR WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

RANDY ORTON (30 percent)

Photo by George Napolitano

MOST HATED

When 2010 opened, Wade Barrett, David Otunga, Justin Gabriel, and Heath Slater were virtual unknowns (at least outside of WWE's developmental territory of Florida Championship Wrestling). Less than 12 months later, the first graduating class of *WWE NXT* has garnered more than 30 percent of the vote in the Most Hated category.

This marks the first time that a faction of wrestlers has been voted Most Hated by *PWI* readers. To put that achievement into perspective, neither the NWO nor The Four Horsemen have ever won this award as a unit (though individual members of each of those groups did earn the Most Hated designation).

On the June 7 edition of *Raw*, the yet-to-be-named *NXT* faction was responsible for one of the most captivating and unforgettable segments ever to air on WWE television. The eight so-called *NXT* "rookies" circled WWE champion John Cena and administered a savage beating, effectively serving notice to the entire WWE that they were fed up with being judged and that they were taking matters into their own hands.

Nexus followed up the attack on Cena with subsequent attacks on Bret Hart, Rick Steamboat, and Vince McMahon. Their interference cost Cena his championship,

Over the next few months, Nexus leader Barrett would whittle down membership of the group, banishing Daniel Bryan, Darren Young, and Michael Tarver (Skip Sheffield was sidelined with a broken ankle). Barrett would later bring *NXT* Season Two alumni Michael McGillicuddy and Husky Harris into the group. Even with those lineup changes, Nexus quickly became the most dominant force in WWE, asserting its will with impunity and systematically destroying its enemies with gangland-style assaults. Under Barrett's leadership, Nexus would go on to headline SummerSlam, capture the tag team championship, and manage to make Cena an unwilling member of the group, courtesy of Barrett's victory over Cena at Hell in a Cell.

Nexus' dominance, and Barrett's insufferable arrogance, proved to be enough to power the WWE newcomers past CM Punk and The Miz to take the Most Hated award.

True to form, Barrett interpreted his Most Hated win as a symbol of Nexus' supremacy.

"It's only natural for the fans to hate Nexus. After all, we are everything they wish they could be, but never will be," Barrett said. "Every member of The Nexus would agree that we would rather be hated and successful than popular and mediocre. I think, in time, the WWE Universe will come recognize what we are all about and, if they have a modicum of intelligence, will learn to appreciate and—dare I say—respect us."

RUNNERS-UP

CM PUNK (21 percent)

First Runner-Up: The self-appointed messiah of the Straight Edge Society spent most of 2010 preaching about his substance-free philosophy and antagonizing fans for their values. When he wasn't condemning the fans for their moral turpitude, Punk was feuding with fan favorites like Rey Mysterio Jr. and The Big Show, which is a surefire way to get on the fans' bad side. Many of those who cast their vote for Punk specifically cited his verbal abuse of Mysterio's nine-year-old daughter, Aaliyah, as the primary reason for their selection.

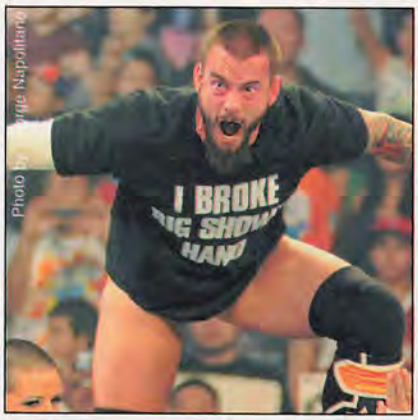

Photo by Jorge Napolitano

THE MIZ (20 percent)

Second Runner-Up: Honestly, we thought Miz would win this award in a landslide. After all, no one was smugger, more infuriating, and more irritating than The Miz, particularly after he won the WWE heavyweight championship from a depleted Randy Orton. Miz extended himself across all three WWE brands this year, appearing on Raw, Smackdown, and NXT, and infuriating fans everywhere he went. He says he's awesome, but many of our respondents had some different adjectives for the former reality TV star ... and many of them aren't fit for a family publication.

Photo by Stu Saks

HULK HOGAN/ ERIC BISCHOFF (13 percent)

Third Runner-Up: The so-called Hogan/ Bischoff regime was supposed to represent a new beginning for TNA when the duo arrived amidst unprecedented fanfare in January. But after Hogan and Bischoff failed to make a discernable impact in the ratings, the two quickly fell out of favor with many fans. They responded by launching a 2010 version of the NWO known as Immortal. Hogan and Bischoff managed to wrest control of TNA from Dixie Carter, corrupt Jeff Hardy, and turn TNA on its ear. Bischoff and Hogan revealed their true nature.

Photo by Lee South/ TNA Wrestling

VOTES FOR OTHERS (14 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Michael Cole, Albert Del Rio, Vickie Guerrero, Jeff Hardy, Kane, and AJ Styles.

MOST HATED WRESTLER OF THE YEAR
THE NEXUS
(32 percent)
Photo by George Napolitano

2010

MATCH OF THE YEAR

When it was announced that Shawn Michaels and The Undertaker would square off in a WrestleMania rematch, some fans (and wrestling journalists) felt a tad disappointed. After all, Michaels and 'Taker could never recapture the excitement and drama of last year's Match of the Year, could they? They could ... and they did.

In fact, with the added stipulation that Michaels would retire if he lost, the WrestleMania 26 clash of the icons may have been even more dramatic and more compelling than the 2009 Match of the Year. Undertaker agreed to face Michaels only if Michaels agreed to retire if he lost.

Even with all that pressure on him, HBK charged "The Dead Man" with abandon as the opening bell sounded. Undertaker got the best of an early striking exchange, then tried to end the match early with a chokeslam, but Michaels slipped from his grasp.

The action spilled to the floor where Undertaker targeted Michaels' back. Michaels reclaimed the upper hand inside the ring, snaring Undertaker in a figure-four leglock. Michaels dropped 'Taker with a flying forearm, then took a shot at Sweet Chin Music. Undertaker evaded it, though, and caught Michaels with a chokeslam for a near-fall.

With Michaels seemingly in trouble, Undertaker attempted a Tombstone, but Michaels escaped and caught 'Taker in an anklelock. Undertaker sought safety outside the ring, where he connected with a Tombstone onto the cement floor.

Remarkably, Michaels recovered and barely avoided a Last Ride power bomb that would have sealed the match and his career. Undertaker locked in a Hell's Gate choke, but Michaels turned it into a pinning position, then connected with a superkick that floored 'Taker. UT ducked a second superkick and hit a power bomb.

Once again, the battle spilled to the floor. Michaels hit Sweet Chin Music again, sending 'Taker slumping into the announce table. With 'Taker on his back, Michaels climbed the ropes and attempted a moonsault. Undertaker moved and Michaels crashed onto the table.

Back in the ring, Undertaker connected with another chokeslam, followed by a second Tombstone. Michaels battled back, fighting to his feet. As 72,219 fans cheered, Undertaker implored Michaels to stay down. But Michaels refused to quit. Undertaker connected with one more leaping Tombstone to end the match at 23:59 and extend his WM win streak to 18.

Equally as significant, this marks Michaels' seventh consecutive Match of the Year award, which is another streak that is unlikely ever to be broken.

RUNNERS-UP

BEER MONEY INC. vs. MOTOR CITY MACHINE GUNS

(13 percent)

First Runner-Up: In the rubber match of the best-of-five series, The Machine Guns' grip on the tag title appeared to be slipping when Beer Money won the first fall with a DWI, but the Guns won the second fall with a neck-breaker/splash combination. The entire five-match series came down to the final fall. With the Impact Zone fans chanting "Match Of The Year," the teams traded the advantage. In the end, the Guns scored the final fall on James Storm to win the match and the series.

Photo by Lee South/ TNA Wrestling

KURT ANGLE vs. MR. ANDERSON (9 percent)

Second Runner-Up: Mr. Anderson came into this Lockdown match with an edge. He'd defeated Angle on *Impact* and won the key to the cage door. Angle prevented Anderson from escaping, then vented his frustrations by rocking Anderson with six consecutive German suplexes, followed by a German superplex, and a moonsault off the top of the cage. Anderson came back for more and hit a Mic Check, but anything goes in a cage, and Angle used his dog tags to choke out Anderson.

Photo by George Taninds

TYLER BLACK vs. DAVEY RICHARDS (7 percent)

Third Runner-Up: This June 19 bout was the hottest Ring of Honor match of the year, starting from the moment Richards refused to shake Black's hand to the moment the champion pinned Richards almost 30 minutes later. This was an incredible match filled with breathtaking highspots and near-falls. Richards barely avoided a countout, kicked out of God's Last Gift, and nearly took the win with a Texas cloverleaf. Ultimately, Black proved to be too much for Richards on this night.

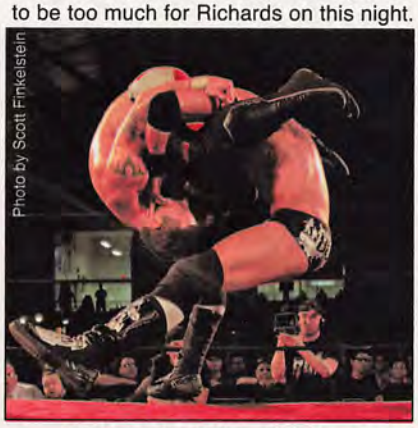
Photo by Scott Finkelstein

VOTES FOR OTHERS (42 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters that did not capture a runner-up spot include: Kurt Angle vs. AJ Styles (January 4), Royal Rumble (January 31), John Cena vs. Batista (March 28), The Briscoe Brothers vs. Chris Hero and Claudio Castagnoli (April 3), AJ Styles vs. Rob Van Dam (April 19), Bryan Danielson vs. Shingo (July 24), and Daniel Bryan vs. Dolph Ziggler (October 24).

MATCH OF THE YEAR

THE UNDERTAKER vs. SHAWN MICHAELS

(Wrestlemania 26) (29 percent)

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TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

Chris Sabin and Alex Shelley began teaming in 2006. Over the next few years, they built a reputation as one of wrestling's top tandems, and arguably the best pound-for-pound team in the sport. After years of show-stealing matches, The Motor City Machine Guns finally got to taste championship gold in 2010. And they won Tag Team of the Year honors with an incredible 46 percent of the vote.

At Victory Road, Sabin and Shelley defeated their longtime rivals, Beer Money Inc., to win the vacant TNA tag team championship. Though the Machine Guns had struggled against James Storm and Robert Roode in the past, they answered their critics by besting Beer Money in a fantastic best-of-five series over the summer. They bolstered their claim of being the top tandem in wrestling with a series of successful title defenses against Generation Me. In perhaps their biggest test of the year, Sabin and Shelley successfully defended the tag title against Team 3-D at Turning Point.

Our respondents were impressed by the Guns' precision teamwork, innovative double-team attacks, and high-energy style. Many of those respondents compared the Guns to some of wrestling's all-time great tag teams, such as The Midnight Express, The Rock 'n' Roll Express, The Hardy Boyz, and The Rockers.

"The Motor City Machine Guns are worth the price of a pay-per-view buy all by themselves," wrote Jessie Reidy of Henrietta, New York. "They're the most exciting team I've seen in years."

The other factor in the Guns' favor is their longevity as a tag team. Many of the other top vote-getters (including The Hart Dynasty, Team 3-D, and Show-Miz) broke up, leaving the path clear for MCMG to claim top honors.

This marks the third consecutive year that a TNA team has won this award (Team 3-D in 2009 and Beer Money in 2008). TNA's dominance in this category is a direct result of its emphasis on tag team wrestling, which has been steadily de-emphasized by WWE in recent years. Many of our respondents noted that they believed TNA had the strongest tag team wrestling of any promotion. And if the Guns are on top of TNA, it simply stands to reason that they are wrestling's best tag team.

"Forty-six percent, eh? That means that 4.6 of every 10 people voted for us. That's not too bad," Shelley said. "I guess 54 percent of fans don't know tag team excellence when they see it. Seriously, thank you to everyone who voted for us. We appreciate the support."

RUNNERS-UP

THE HART DYNASTY (10 percent)

First Runner-Up: Tyson Kidd and D.H. Smith were the most successful tag team in WWE in 2010, but even with Bret Hart in their corner, they struggled for their share of the spotlight. Like The Hart Foundation, the Dynasty was comprised of a superior technician and a broad-chested power merchant, but Kidd and Smith never showed the charisma that "The Hitman" and "The Anvil" had. After a brief feud with The Uso Brothers, the Dynasty dropped the belts to the unheralded team of Drew McIntyre and Cody Rhodes. Barely two months later, Kidd turned on Smith, fracturing the team.

CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI & CHRIS HERO (9 percent)

Second Runner-Up: The Kings of Wrestling came close to beating out The Hart Dynasty for the first runner-up spot, which is impressive considering how much more exposure Kidd and Smith received in WWE. Castagnoli and Hero won the ROH tag title from The Briscoes in April and defended the belts against all comers throughout the year. Hero and Castagnoli combine strength and stiff striking with well-timed double-team maneuvers, making them the most feared team on the indy circuit.

BEER MONEY INC. (7 percent)

Third Runner-Up: The 2008 Tag Team of the Year is still one of wrestling's elite tandems. Had they scored just one more win in that best-of-five series against the MCMG, perhaps they would have reclaimed the Tag Team of the Year award. However, after falling to the Guns, Storm and Roode slipped out of title contention as they shifted their focus to being hired muscle for Fortune. Roode and Storm are living the good life of champagne, caviar, and pretty girls, but they are no longer the gold standard in tag team wrestling..

VOTES FOR OTHERS (39 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: The Briscoe Brothers, Drew McIntyre & Cody Rhodes, The Miz & The Big Show, Bison Smith & Keith Walker, Team 3-D, and Testuya Naito & Yujiro Takahashi.

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

THE MOTOR CITY MACHINE GUNS

(46 percent)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

For the second consecutive year, the third-generation superstar outpaced the competition to earn Wrestler of the Year honors. Randy Orton becomes the fifth wrestler in the history of the *PWI* Achievement Awards to win back-to-back Wrestler of the Year honors, following in the footsteps of John Cena (2006-2007), Steve Austin (1998-1999), Ric Flair (who won it three times in a row, 1984-1986), and Dusty Rhodes (1977-1978).

Orton's road to Wrestler of the Year was long and winding. After failing to unseat Sheamus for the WWE title at the Royal Rumble, Orton became mired in a feud against his former Legacy teammates, Ted DiBiase Jr. and Cody Rhodes. He moved on to a brief feud against then-World champion Jack Swagger and was unable to beat Swagger for that championship. He eventually repositioned himself as the top contender for the WWE championship and earned a title shot against Sheamus at SummerSlam, but Sheamus managed to protect his title by intentionally getting himself disqualified.

It wasn't until September's Night of Champions pay-per-view that Orton finally managed to get another taste of championship gold. Orton outlasted Sheamus, John Cena, Wade Barrett, Edge, and Chris Jericho in a Six-Pack Challenge elimination match to win his seventh world championship.

While Orton went most of the year without a championship, he was consistently contending for a WWE world title all year long. While other WWE main-eventers missed time to injuries (The Undertaker and Triple-H) or were sidetracked with feuds that took them out of the title picture (John Cena and Edge), Orton managed to stay near the top of the WWE ratings all year long.

Another factor that contributed to Orton's victory in this category was his newfound popularity. Historically speaking, fan favorites tend to fare better in the Wrestler of the Year fan balloting, as many fans are reluctant to cast their vote for a wrestler that relies on shortcuts and rulebreaking. In fact, this is the seventh time that a wrestler has won the Most Popular *and* Wrestler of the Year award the same year.

Another noteworthy fact is that Orton's second Wrestler of the Year victory puts him past his mentor, Triple-H, as Triple-H has won this award only once (in 2008). Orton also is the only wrestler to either win this award or snag a runner-up spot each year since 2007.

"I think 2010 firmly solidified Orton's status as one of the best wrestlers of his era," wrote Nathan Andres of Allentown, Pennsylvania. "He succeeded on his own. He proved he can carry the ball as Raw's top fan favorite. If not for Sheamus relying on cheap DQ tactics, Orton would have won the championship much earlier, too."

RUNNERS-UP

ROB VAN DAM (17 percent)

First Runner-Up: RVD debuted in TNA in surprising fashion, won the TNA World title, lead an Extreme reunion, and led the charge against Hulk Hogan and Immortal. Along the way, he picked up wins over some of TNA's top stars, including AJ Styles, Jeff Hardy, and Abyss. If RVD had competed for a full year (he debuted in March and missed time due to injuries in the summer), he may just have garnered enough support to steal this award away from Orton, which would have been an incredible feat for a TNA wrestler.

Photo by Lee South/ TNA Wrestling

JOHN CENA (14 percent)

Second Runner-Up: Cena started the year on a hot streak and seemed pretty secure as WWE champion when he sent Batista packing from WWE. But The Nexus proved to be Cena's undoing. Nexus' interference cost Cena the WWE title, and Cena spent the second half of 2010 trying to settle the score instead of contending for the belt. A two-time Wrestler of the Year winner, Cena is still arguably WWE's most valuable player, but he fell from the main-event scene into a supporting role in the second half of the year.

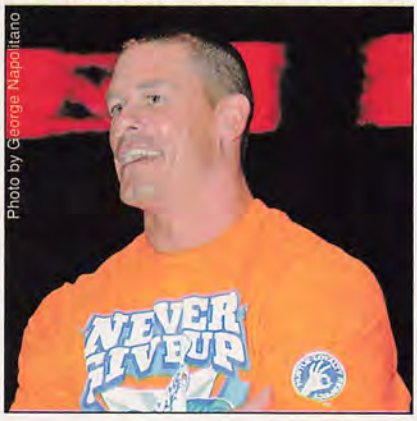

Photo by George Napolitano

SHEAMUS (12 percent)

Third Runner-Up: If you judge purely by the length of time he held the WWE championship in 2010, a case could be made that Sheamus is the most deserving Wrestler of the Year of all the top vote-getters. Sheamus' two WWE title reigns added up to almost five combined months. However, Sheamus' reliance on outside interference and intentional disqualifications to keep his title hurt him in the balloting. He may not have been popular, and his methods were controversial, but no one can deny Sheamus' success in 2010.

Photo by Wayne McCarty

VOTES FOR OTHERS (37 percent)

Some of the other top vote-getters who did not capture a runner-up spot include: Daniel Bryan, Jeff Hardy, Chris Jericho, Kane, Yoshinobu Kanemaru Miz, CM Punk, AJ Styles, Suwama, and Dr. Wagner Jr.

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR
RANDY ORTON (20 percent)
Photo by George Napolitano

PWI ACHIEVEMENT: STANLEY WESTON AWARD

TO HIS FRIENDS, he was known as "Walter." A quiet man with a passion for learning, he was a strict vegetarian and a passionate photographer, described by those who knew him as a polite gentleman who was quick with a joke and happy to offer advice and words of encouragement to anyone willing to ask.

But to wrestling fans around the world, he was known as "Killer," a monster of a man at 6'7", 275 pounds who took glee in torturing wrestlers inside the squared circle. Not only did he once tear off an opponent's ear, but he also had the temerity to show up in his victim's hospital room and laugh in his face.

At least, that's how it was reported at the time. In a match in 1954, Walter "Tarzan" Kowalski leaped off the top rope, aiming a kneedrop at his opponent, Yukon Eric. In a freak accident, Kowalski's shinbone caught the side of Eric's head and sheared off his left ear.

A group of sportswriters happened to be on hand when a contrite Kowalski went to visit Eric in the hospital a couple of days later. But when Kowalski saw Eric with his head covered with gauze and bandages, looking like a mummy, he couldn't help but laugh. The sportswriters interpreted his laughter as sadism and dubbed him "Killer Kowalski." Not only would the name stick, it would become recognizable to people worldwide, be they wrestling fans or not.

KILLER KOWALSKI

Kowalski's contribution to wrestling is enormous. He wrestled for more than 30 years and was a headliner all over the world. He won dozens of championships and feuded with many of wrestling's biggest names, including Bruno Sammartino, Andre the Giant, Lou Thesz, Gorgeous George, and Buddy Rogers. By his own estimation, Kowalski wrestled more than 6,000 matches over the course of his career. He was named to both the *Wrestling Observer* and WWE Halls of Fame in 1996.

The editors of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED hereby posthumously award the 2010 Stanley Weston Award to Walter "Killer" Kowalski, who died of a heart attack in 2008 at age 81. Named after the founder of the PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED family of magazines, the Stanley Weston Award is the highest honor bestowed by our editorial staff. It is given to an individual who has made a positive and lasting contribution to pro wrestling.

In Kowalski's case, his contribution to wrestling did not end when he retired from active competition in 1977, at which point Kowalski opened a wrestling school in Malden, Massachusetts. He would take a hands-on role in training aspiring wrestlers and his school became one of the most respected in the country. Among those he trained are Triple-H, Big John Studd, Chyna, and Perry Saturn. In addition to training, he would give his students tips about nutrition and fitness. He never drank alcohol or milk, or smoked cigarettes, and maintained a strict vegetarian diet and rigid exercise program.

"Walter wasn't a man who taught you spectacular moves," said Triple-H. "It was more about teaching you how to become a star. Make yourself bigger than life, he'd say. A lot of guys don't get it—it's a lost art. Now I find myself teaching this same philosophy to the guys coming up. It's like when you're a parent; you end up saying the same things to your children that your parents told you and that you didn't necessarily want to hear at the time."

Kowalski was indeed like a parent to his students, particularly the ones who he thought had true potential to make it in this business and needed him the most.

"He was a patient man, not one who yelled and screamed," recalled Triple-H. "But if he told you to do something and you didn't do it, he was pissed off. You really knew he was mad when he hit you across the back with a phone book.

"He was proud to have had me as a student," concluded Triple-H, "and I was proud to have had him as my teacher."

My Kids!: WWE's TV PG-13 rating
—Stacy Evers, Reading, PA

Finally, TNA Gets It Right!: Motor City Machine Guns win the tag team title
—Angela Dublin, Metropolis, IL

Five-Star Hog Splash: Vickie Guerrero's top-rope dive at WrestleMania 26
—Victoria Ramirez, St. Paul, MN

Free Agent Signing Of The Year: Mickie James by TNA
—Art Brandt, Washington, DC

From Cheerleader To Champion: Dolph Ziggler
—Richard Key, Petersburg, VA

"Hello, Ladies!!! Goodbye, Ladies!!!": Sean Morley's brief TNA career
—Tom Smail, Lake Hiawatha, NJ

From Knockout To Nowhere: Gail Kim
—John Risely, Hanford, CA

Genesis "I Can't Dance" Award: Vladimir Kozlov
—Ray Mossly, Quincy, MA

Gone, But Forgotten: Batista
—Ren Foley, Detroit MI

Ground Control To Major Tom High-Flyer Award: Evan Bourne
—Thomas Mikkelson, Bangor, ME

Heaven Will Never Be The Same: R.I.P., Luna Vachon
—Tom Smail, Lake Hiawatha, NJ

He Could've Sprung For A Visit To A Speech Therapist When Jack Was Young: Jack Swagger's "father," Jimmy Golden
—Larry Ackerjay, Philadelphia, PA

How Do You Say "gold digger" In French?: Maryse
—Chad Bell, Kansas City, MO

I Remember You When You Were WCW: TNA
—Bill Franz, Jackson, MS

Least Effective Disguise in History: Tara hiding under a motorcycle helmet
—Avery Kurtis, Bear, DE

Loves To Drink His Own Bathwater: The Miz
—Daniel Garcia drgtna1982@yahoo.com

Making Tag Team Wrestling Awesome Again!: MCMGs and Beer Money's best-of-five series
—Lindsay Brown ablk389@gmail.com

Man Of 1,000 Voices: Jay Lethal
—Neil Cruz, Brooklyn, NY

M-I-Z: How self-important is spelled
—**Charles Root, Richmond, VA**

Most Likely To Marry His Reflection: The Miz
—**Stephen Garman, Graterford, PA**

Most Talent With The Least To Show For It: Gail Kim
—**Jarrod Wilkerson, Greensboro, NC**

Most Underutilized Wrestler: Christian
—**Michael Christensen, Woolwich Twp., NJ**

Mouth Wrote A Check His Ass Couldn't Cash: Awesome Kong punks Bubba the Love Sponge
—**Julie Browardschmidt, Chicago, IL**

Muhammad Ali Now You're Just Tarnishing Your Reputation Award: Ric Flair
—**Glenn Bobbindale, Chadds Ford, PA**

Needs A Check-Up From The Neck Up: Samoa Joe
—**Joe Raphael, Louisville, KY**

Need A Good Eye Exam: Vickie's men—Edge, Big Show, Eric Escobar, and Dolph Ziggler
—**Thomas Delaney, Boston, MA**

Nicest Legs Since Stacy Keibler: Kelly Kelly
—**James Randleman, Racine, WI**

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Never Lost A Step: Rob Van Dam
—**Kevin Blanchard eksecutioner28@hotmail.com**

"No Chance" Award: Linda McMahon's Senate bid
—**Jay Piccardo, Boston, MA**

"O-VER-RAT-ED!" Award: Michelle McCool
—**Anthony Virgilio, Buffalo, NY**

Overstayed Their Welcome Award: The Nexus
—**Charlie Walker, Malvern, PA**

Pot Calling The Kettle Black Award: Vince McMahon saying TNA is too violent
—**Richard J. Cincotti, Atlantic City, NJ**

Please Call Me When The Real WWE Returns: WWE adopts a TV PG-13 approach
—**Ben Chrochunis, Pittsburgh, PA**

Please! Not Again! Award: EV2.0
—**Kenny Valverde, Anaheim, CA**

Quick, Hide Your Necktie!: Daniel Bryan
—**Chad Simplicio newgoldenwynde@hotmail.com**

Redefining Women's Wrestling Each Week: Natalya
—**Patti Latimore, Hartford, CT**

Salvatore Sincere V2.0: Alberto Del Rio.
—**John Risely, Hanford, CA**

Sexiest. Feud. EVER!: Eve Torres vs. Maryse
—**Nick Garrett ngarrett92@yahoo.com**

Sheamus, I Got Two Words For You—Tanning Booth!
—**Tom Smail, Lake Hiawatha, NJ**

Technological Warfare: Edge vs. Cole's laptop
—**Chris Snell, Mobile, AL**

When They Said, "For Life!" They Weren't Kidding: Hogan and Bischoff form Immortal
—**Keith McCabe, Toms River, NJ**

The Real Beautiful Person: Angelina Love
—**Addie Ortega-Ramirez ninjapanda989@hotmail.com**

Time WWE Fans Can't Have Back: Santino vs. Kozlov Dance Match
—**Chris Raby, Bucyrus, OH**

Was Dying To Make WWE Return: Paul Bearer
—**Tom Smail, Lake Hiawatha, NJ**

WCW Rides Again: TNA
—**Stephen Garman, Graterford, PA**

What A Difference A Year Makes: AJ Styles
—**Barbara Cooper, Orlando, FL**

What Is She Still Doing In The Independents?: Mercedes Martinez
—**Eric Perez, Secaucus, NJ**

What Were They Thinking Award: WWE letting Mickie James go
—**Randall Bloemke, Dallas TX**

That's Why They Make Spanx Award: Vicki Guerrero
—**Jennifer Rose, Carteret, NJ**

Worst Attempt At Nostalgia: TNA's Hardcore Justice PPV
—**Joe Regina, Old Bridge, NJ**

Worst Ric Flair Impersonation: AJ Styles
—**Dennis DeKuypers, St. Paul, MN**

WWE's Loss Is TNA's Gain: Mickie James
—**Allen Headon, Dublin, Ireland**

Totally Uncool Award: Lay-Cool
—**Christina Densch, Port St. Lucy, FL**

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Nov. 1983: We Sent Hulk Hogan To Cover Bockwinkel vs. Wahoo ... And All Hell Broke Loose! Also: James J. Dillon, Race-Kevin Von Erich, Paul Ellering, Reed-JYD.

April 1984: Rick Steamboat Quits Wrestling! The *Real* Story Behind His Most Painful Decision. Also: Masked Superstar-Mulligan, Adams-Garvin, Barry Windham, Ric Flair.

June 1984: Ric Flair On The Defensive: Is Mike Rotundo Ready To Take The NWA Title? Also: Ted DiBiase, Jim Cornette, Angelo Mosca Jr.

Aug. 1984: Junkyard Dog Joins Jim Valiant's Boogie Woogie Brigade. Also: Steve O-Zbyszko, Magnum-Wrestling II, Austin Idol, Sugar-Spoiler.

Sept. 1984: Rick Martel Dethrones Jumbo Tsuruta: Finally, An AWA Champion To Be Proud Of. Also: Brody-LeDuc, Iron Sheik, Kerry Von Erich, Rock 'n' Roll Express.

Nov. 1984: Dusty Rhodes: Champion Of Champions ... And Still The Lord Of The Ring. Also: Rich-Gilbert, Gino Hernandez, Road Warriors, JYD-Reed.

Dec. 1984: How Hulkamania Trampled Big John Studd. Also: Road Warriors, Magnum T.A., Wahoo McDaniel, Sullivan-Rhodes.

March 1985: He's Back And Better Than Ever: Backlund-A-Mania Is Sweeping The Nation! Also: Koloffs, Billy Jack, Von Erichs-Devastation Inc.

Sept. 1985: A Psychologist Examines "Rowdy" Roddy Piper! Is He As Crazy As You Think He Is? Also: Magnum-Blanchard, Fantastics, Ric Flair, Gagne & Sammartino.

Jan. 1986: Rick Steamboat vs. Magnificent Muraco: The Volcano Rumbles. Also: Warriors & Ellering, Mike Von Erich, Jake Roberts, Koloff & Khrushchev-Rock 'n' Rolls.

June 1986: Barry Windham's NWA Mission: Humiliate Ric Flair! Also: Nord-Road Warriors, British Bulldogs, L. Von Erich-One Man Gang, Tully Blanchard.

Sept. 1986: Dusty Rhodes & Magnum T.A.: America's Team Is Not Out For Glory ... It's Out For Revenge! Also: Andre-Hogan, Chris Adams, Barry Windham, Scott Hall.

Dec. 1986: Rock 'n' Roll Revival: Morton And Gibson Regain The NWA World Tag Title! Also: Lex Luger, Hogan-Adonis, Hall-DeBeers, Baby Doll.

Jan. 1987: The New Roddy Piper: Why The Fans Love Him ... But Why They Should Hate Him! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Rude-Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow.

Feb. 1987: Hogan, Piper, Orndorff: The WWF's Hate Triangle. Also: Terry Taylor, Ric Flair, Midnight Rockers, Kevin Von Erich.

April 1987: Steamboat & Windham: Manny Happy Returns! Also: Paul Ellering, Hacksaw Duggan, prospects.

Aug. 1987: The Superpowers' Super Victory: Dusty Rhodes & Nikita Koloff Win The Crockett Cup. Also: Hulk Hogan, Lane & Cornette, Mike Von Erich, Adams & Taylor.

Oct. 1987: The Rock 'n' Roll Express Win Their Fourth NWA Title. Also: Hogan-Bigelow, Rhodes-Blanchard, scaffold, Kevin Sullivan.

Nov. 1987: Special Fan Poll: Should Mr. T Be Allowed To Referee? Also: War Games, Bulldogs, Condrey & Rose, Dusty Rhodes.

Dec. 1987: Rhodes Challenges Luger: Will Dusty's U.S. Title Hopes Split The Superpowers? Also: Hayes-Bubba, Magnum T.A., Randy Savage, Al Perez.

Jan. 1988: Is Hulk Hogan Bored With The WWF Title? Also: R&Rs-Horsemen, Flair-R. Garvin, Adrian Adonis, Steve Williams.

Feb. 1988: A Special Analysis By Jesse Ventura: Randy Savage Has Wimped Out! Also: Sting, R&Rs-Blanchard & Anderson, Kevin Von Erich, Dangerously-Lawler-Dundee.

March 1988: Bam Bam Bigelow: Wrestling's Most Dangerous Man. Also: Adams-Perez, Nikita Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.

June 1988: The Noble Savage: How Beauty Killed The Beast Within "The Macho Man." Also: Warriors-Warlord & Barbarian, R&R Express, Baby Doll, G. Gagne-Hennig.

July 1988: A Toast To Wrestling's Odd Couple: Kerry Von Erich & Michael Hayes Unite! Also: DiBiase-Savage-Hogan, Dillon & Horsemen, Sting, Rick Steamboat.

Aug. 1988: What Randy Savage Must Do To Escape The Shadow Of Hulk Hogan. Also: Hyatt-Gilbert, Sting, Michael Hayes, Honky Tonk.

Oct. 1988: Preview & Analysis: Megapowers vs. Megabucks. Also: Horsemen, Jerry Lawler, Warlord & Barbarian, Dangerously-Gilbert, Beefcake-Honky Tonk.

Nov. 1988: Dusty Rhodes vs. Barry Windham: The Night The Teacher Learned A Lesson. Also: Kerry-Lawler, Lex Luger, Muraco-Valentine, Freebirds.

Dec. 1988: Exclusive "Hotseat" Interview: Roddy Piper—Will He Ever Be Back? Also: Powers of Pain, Ultimate Warrior, Ric Flair, Bambi-Mystic, Kevin Von Erich.

Feb. 1989: Tully & Arn Will Fall Under Bobby Heenan! A Special Analysis By J.J. Dillon. Also: Hogan-Bossman, Sgt. Slaughter, Lawler-INSIDE WRESTLING, Davis-Wayne.

Aug. 1989: Your Ballots Are In: Hulkamania Rules! Also: Tanaka & Diamond, Rick Steamboat, Bigelow-Rhodes, Rick Rude, Jim Cornette.

Sept. 1989: Savage Is Shamed By Hogan—Only Elizabeth Can Save Him Now. Also: Lex Luger, Mil Mascaras, Dusty Rhodes, Bushwhackers, Skandor Akbar.

Oct. 1989: Dusty Rhodes' WWF Hit List. Also: Hall-Pillman-Vicious, Curt Hennig, Warriors, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.

Dec. 1989: The Dusty Road Is Paved With Gold: The American Dream Lives On! Also: Ric Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry-Chu-hi, Lex Luger, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1990: Why Sting's Friendship Is Tearing Ric Flair Apart! Also: Roberts-DiBiase, Rock 'n' Rolls, Lawler-Embry, Hulk Hogan, Paul E. Dangerously.

Feb. 1990: Sex Symbol Showdown: Rude's Out ... Piper's In ... And The Fans Love It! Also: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Jimmy Snuka, Tom Zenk, Destruction Crew, Kerry Von Erich

April 1990: Starrcade '89: Night Of The Iron Men. Also: Warrior-Hogan, Dustin Rhodes, Buzz Sawyer, WWF shuffle.

June 1990: Tragedy Strikes Sting! How You Can Help Speed His Recovery. Also: Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate Warrior, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1990: Our Urgent Plea To Hulk Hogan & The Ultimate Warrior: Team Up And Eliminate These Men. Also: Steiners, Sting, Earthquake, Kokina Maximus, Tessa.

Aug. 1990: The Experts Agree: Lex Luger Has Made Ric Flair A Broken Man. Also: Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior, Pillman & Zenk, Terry Taylor, Jerry Lawler.

Sept. 1990: Fighting Fire With Fire: The Awesome Foursome—Committed To Destroying The Horsemen. Also: Hulk Hogan, Hacksaw Duggan, JYD, Adams-Jeannie, Midnight Express.

Oct. 1990: Sting: "I Feel Like I've Conquered The World!" Also: Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, El Gigante, Mike Rotundo, Juice Patrol.

Nov. 1990: Ric Flair & Hulk Hogan: A Tale Of Two Ex-Champions. Also: Sid Vicious, Sgt. Slaughter, Jeannie-Toni, Mr. Fuji & Orient Express.

Dec. 1990: Halloween Havoc Horror! Why Sting Is Spooked By Sid Vicious. Also: Hulk Hogan, Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: The Legion Of Doom Will Lead You To Destruction. Also: Paul E. Dangerously, Chris Adams, Steiners, Lawler-T. Funk.

Feb. 1991: Our Plan For The "Hulkster" To Regain The WWF World Belt. Also: Terry Taylor, Rick Martel, Sting & Simmons, all-annoying, Stan Hansen.

March 1991: The Earthquake Feud Rumbles On: Will Hulk Hogan Be The Victim Of His Own Deadly Obsession? Also: Roberts-Martel, Sting-Hansen, Keirn-Perez, Barry Windham.

April 1991: The Steiners: They'd Be Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team, But ... Also: Eddie Gilbert, Flair-Sting, Steiners, Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Sgt. Slaughter.

June 1991: Steiners, LOD: Tag Team Thunder. Also: Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees, Arn Anderson.

July 1991: Hogan's Burning Mad! Beating Slaughter For The Title Was Not Enough. Also: Virgil, Nastys, Steiners, Dan Spivey, Terry Funk.

Aug. 1991: Are The Steiners Getting Too Cocky For Their Own Good? Also: Jerry Lawler, Rick Steamboat, Warrior-Undertaker, Dustin Rhodes. Flair-Windham.

Sept. 1991: Justice Is In The WWF ... And Hogan's In The Biggest Trouble Of His Life! Also: Missy-Paul E., Rick Rude, Curt Hennig, Stevie Ray, Diamond Exchange.

Oct. 1991: Exclusive Preview & Analysis: SummerSlam '91. Also: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Leg Luger, Santana-Atlas, Steve Williams, Studd-Zenk.

Nov. 1991: Our Investigation Reveals ... The Truth Behind The Hogan-Savage Connection. Also: Lex Luger, Ric Flair, War Games, Mounties, foreign objects.

Dec. 1991: A Night To Remember: SummerSlam Provides Heat For The Cold Months Ahead. Also: Alexandra York, Simmons-Luger, Lane & Cornette, Leatherface.

Jan. 1992: INSIDE WRESTLING Reveals: Sting's Memo From A Maniac! Also: Freebirds, Blackhearts, Bret Hart, Dusty Rhodes, Mike Rotundo.

March 1992: Who's Winning The Hogan-Flair Wars? Also: Steiners, Survivor Series, Enforcers-Rhodes & Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd.

May 1992: War! WrestleMania Will Be Sid And Hulk's Battleground. Also: Jushin Liger, Eddie Gilbert, Repo Man, Austin-Blossom, Tri-State & UWF.

June 1992: Sting: A New Champion, A New Era. Also: Hulk Hogan, Harley Race, Marcus Bagwell, Tony Atlas, IRS & DiBiase.

July 1992: Is Regaining The WWF Title An Impossible Undertaking? Also: Sherri & Shawn, Big Van Vader, Gordy & Williams, Kamala, Joe Savoldi.

Aug. 1992: The Closer Flair Gets ... The More Savage "Macho Man" Becomes. Also: Jack-Badd, Brian Christopher, LOD & Ellering, Taylor & Valentine, Dusty Wolfe.

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March 1993: Who Controls The Balance Of Power In The WWF? Also: Shawn Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Dustin, Survivor Series, Rod Price.

April 1993: New Blood! The Wrestlers Who Could Revitalize The WWF In '93. Also: Z-Man & Gunn, Sting-Vader, Dangerous Alliance, Ric Flair.

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May 1998: Is The WWF Screwing Another Hart? Also: Steve Austin, Dallas Page, Booker T, Larry Zbyszko, Al Snow.

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July 1998 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Jericho-Misterio Jr., Steve Austin, Sunny,

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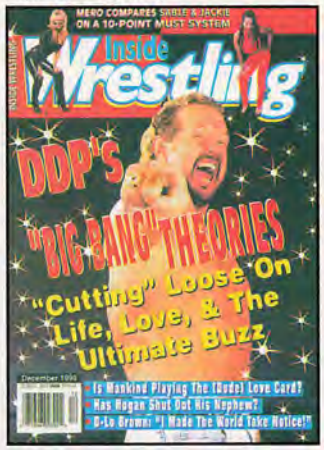

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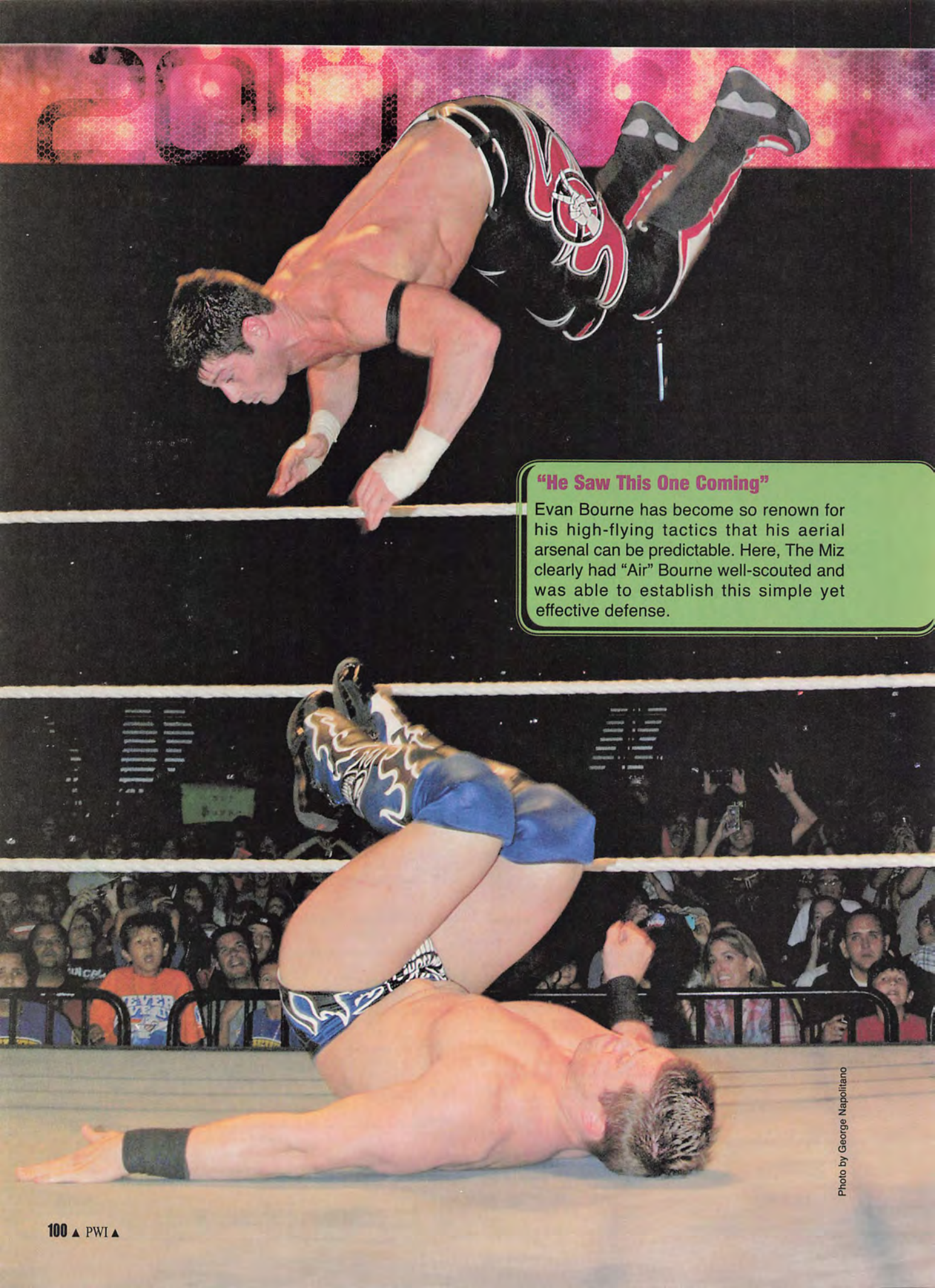
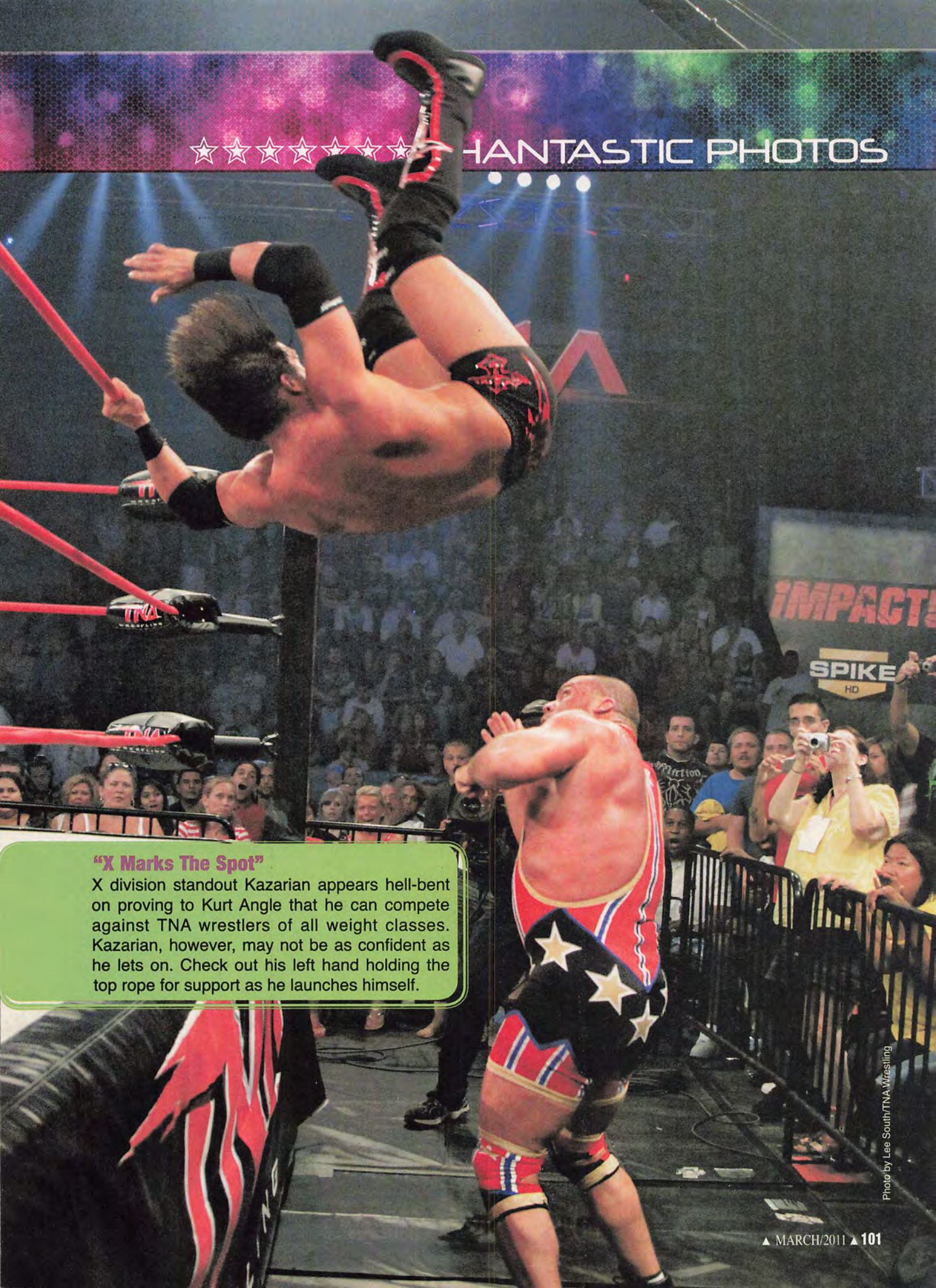


"He Saw This One Coming"

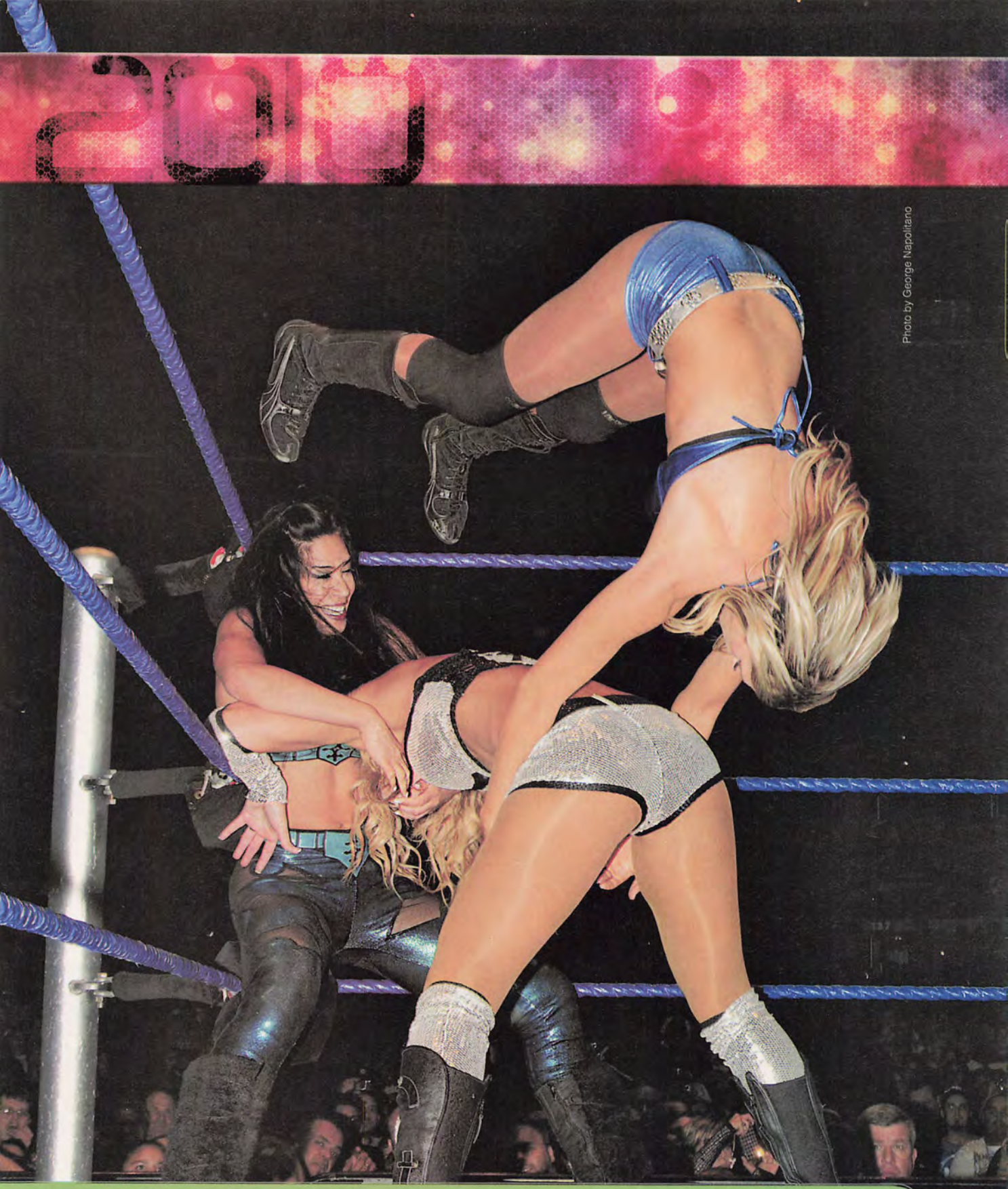
Evan Bourne has become so renown for his high-flying tactics that his aerial arsenal can be predictable. Here, The Miz clearly had "Air" Bourne well-scouted and was able to establish this simple yet effective defense.

Photo by George Napolitano

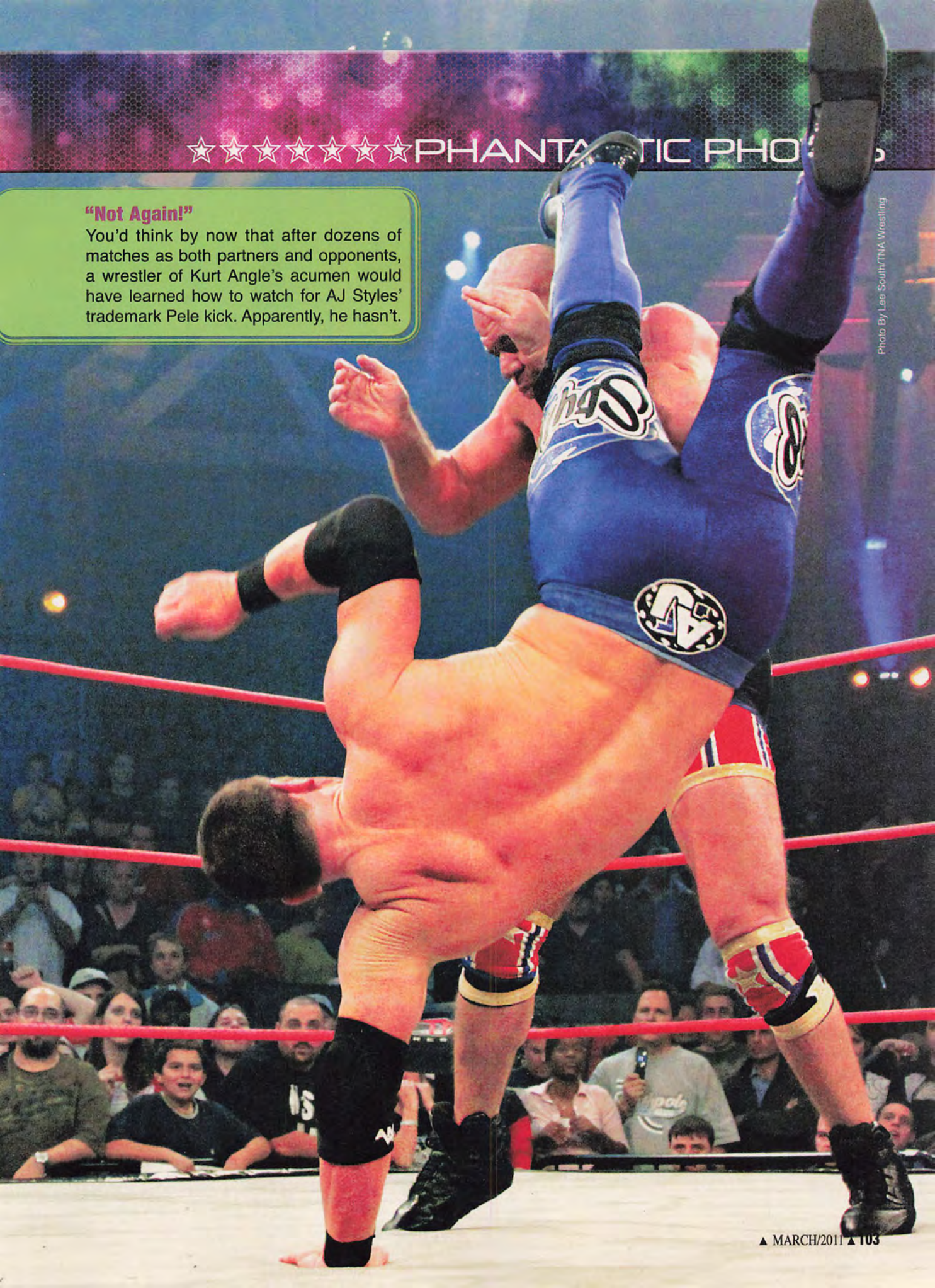


"X Marks The Spot"
X division standout Kazarian appears hell-bent on proving to Kurt Angle that he can compete against TNA wrestlers of all weight classes. Kazarian, however, may not be as confident as he lets on. Check out his left hand holding the top rope for support as he launches himself.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling



"Where's Layla When You Need Her?"
Michelle McCool, may have been our top-rated female wrestler and Woman of the Year, but even she can't fend off two Divas as talented as Melina and Kelly Kelly at the same time. We've grown so accustomed to seeing McCool and partner Layla work so closely together in the ring, we can hardly believe the former co-champion wasn't there to interfere with Kelly's sunset-flip attempt.



"Not Again!"
You'd think by now that after dozens of matches as both partners and opponents, a wrestler of Kurt Angle's acumen would have learned how to watch for AJ Styles' trademark Pele kick. Apparently, he hasn't.

Photo By Lee South/TNA Wrestling

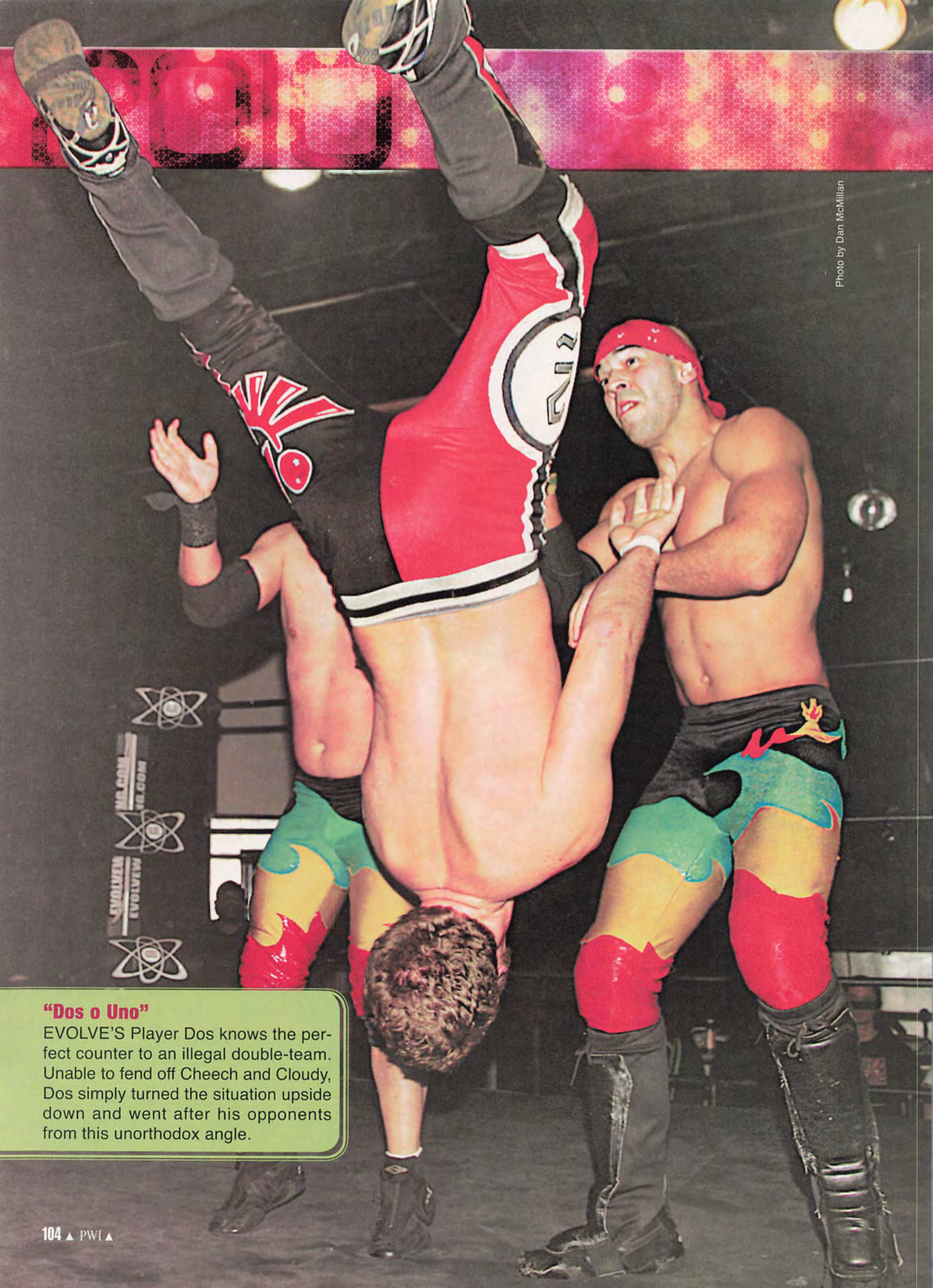


Photo by Dan McMillan

"Dos o Uno"
EVOLVE'S Player Dos knows the perfect counter to an illegal double-team. Unable to fend off Cheech and Cloudy, Dos simply turned the situation upside down and went after his opponents from this unorthodox angle.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

"At Least He Has A Chance To Survive"
It's a good thing for Alex Shelley that Jeremy Buck of Generation Me is closer in size to a cruiserweight than a heavyweight. Imagine the impact that ladder would have with the full weight of, say, Abyss behind it!

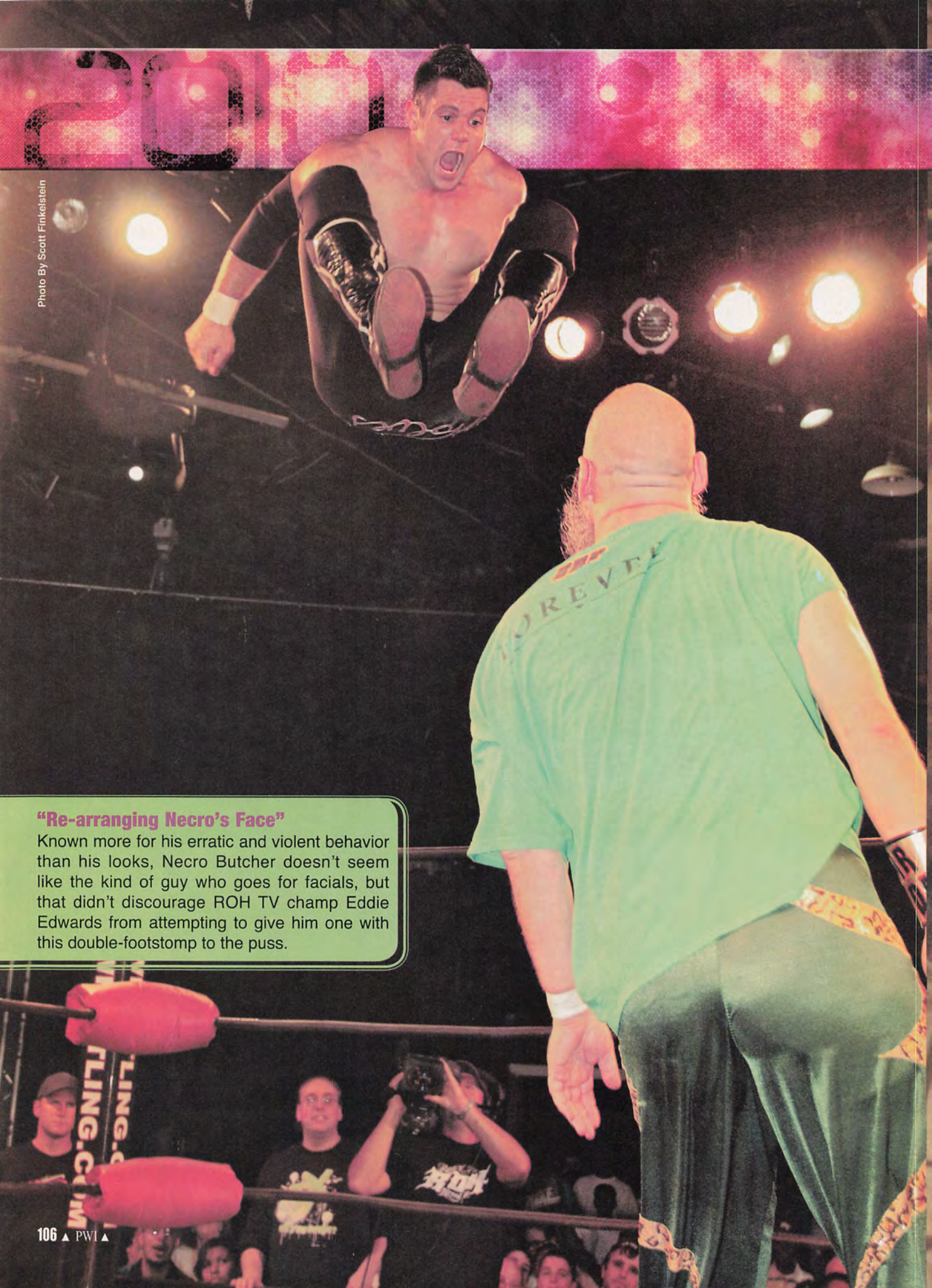
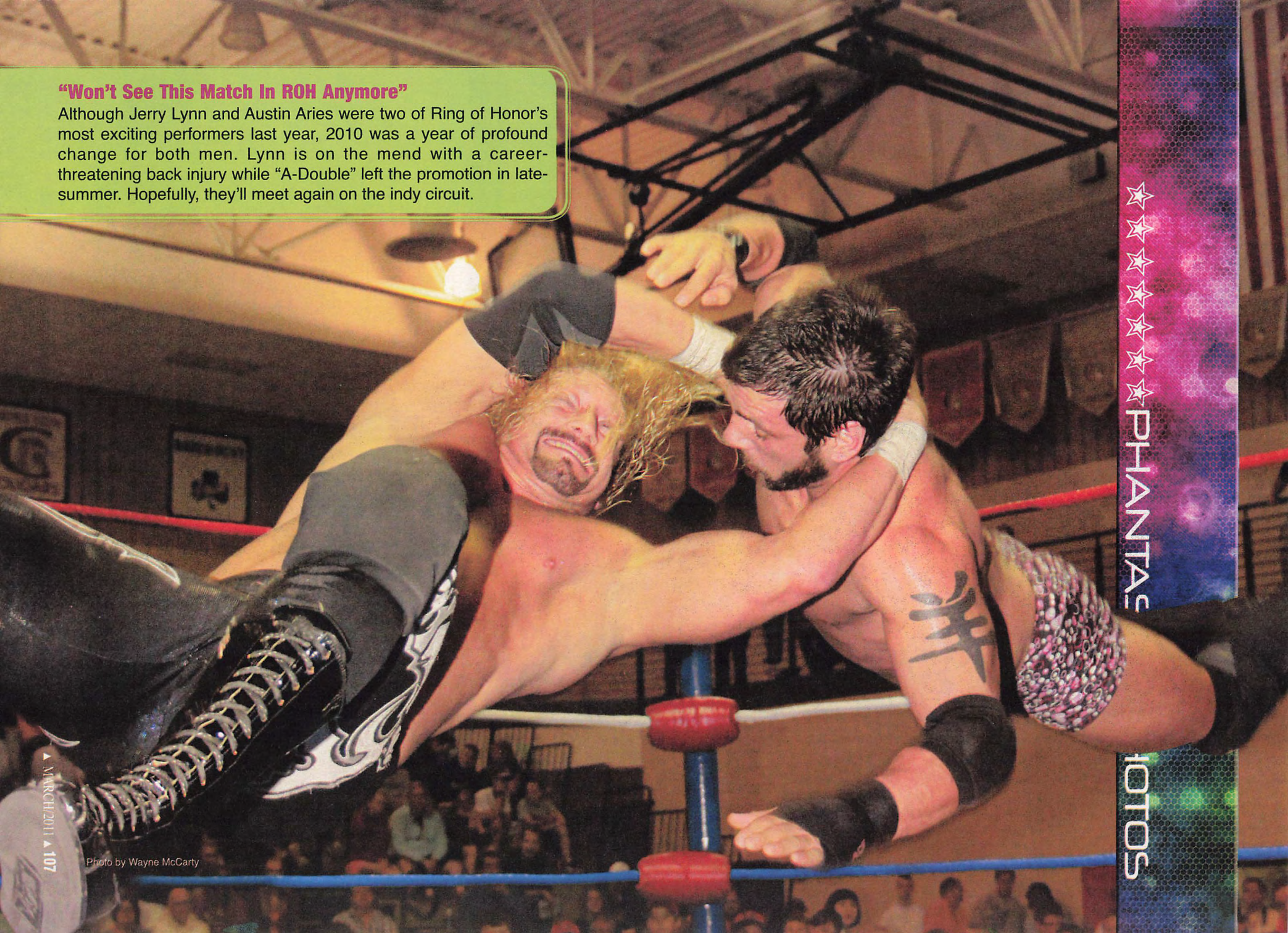


Photo By Scott Finkelstein

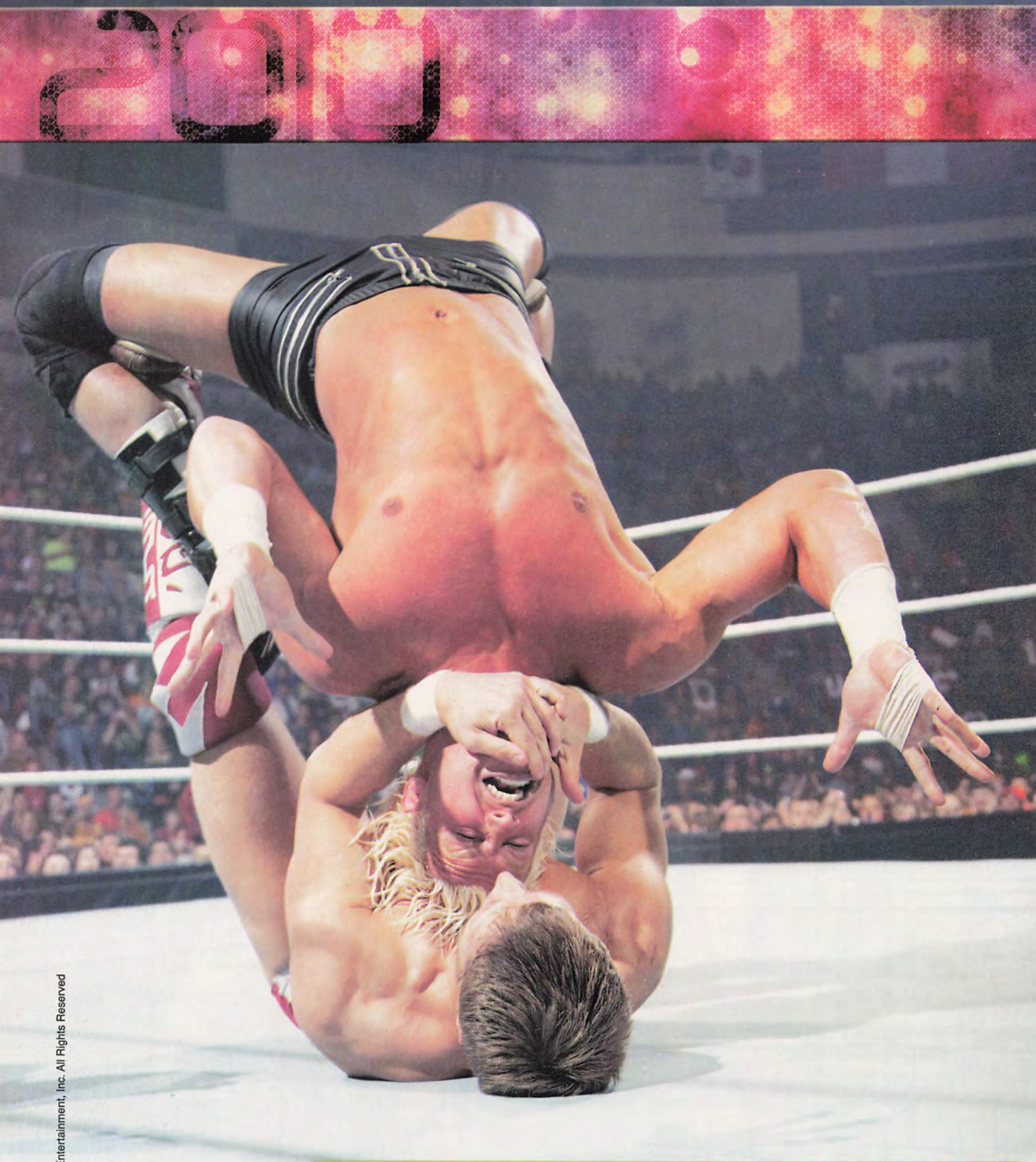
"Re-arranging Necro's Face"
Known more for his erratic and violent behavior than his looks, Necro Butcher doesn't seem like the kind of guy who goes for facials, but that didn't discourage ROH TV champ Eddie Edwards from attempting to give him one with this double-footstomp to the puss.



"Won't See This Match In ROH Anymore"

Although Jerry Lynn and Austin Aries were two of Ring of Honor's most exciting performers last year, 2010 was a year of profound change for both men. Lynn is on the mend with a career-threatening back injury while "A-Double" left the promotion in late-summer. Hopefully, they'll meet again on the indy circuit.

Photo by Wayne McCarty



"My Name Is Daniel Bryan ... And I'm Gonna Break Your Back"
We're not sure, if that's what Bryan actually said once he clamped Dolph Ziggler in this obviously painful stretch. Actually, we doubt either man was in the mood to exchange pleasantries at this point of the match.

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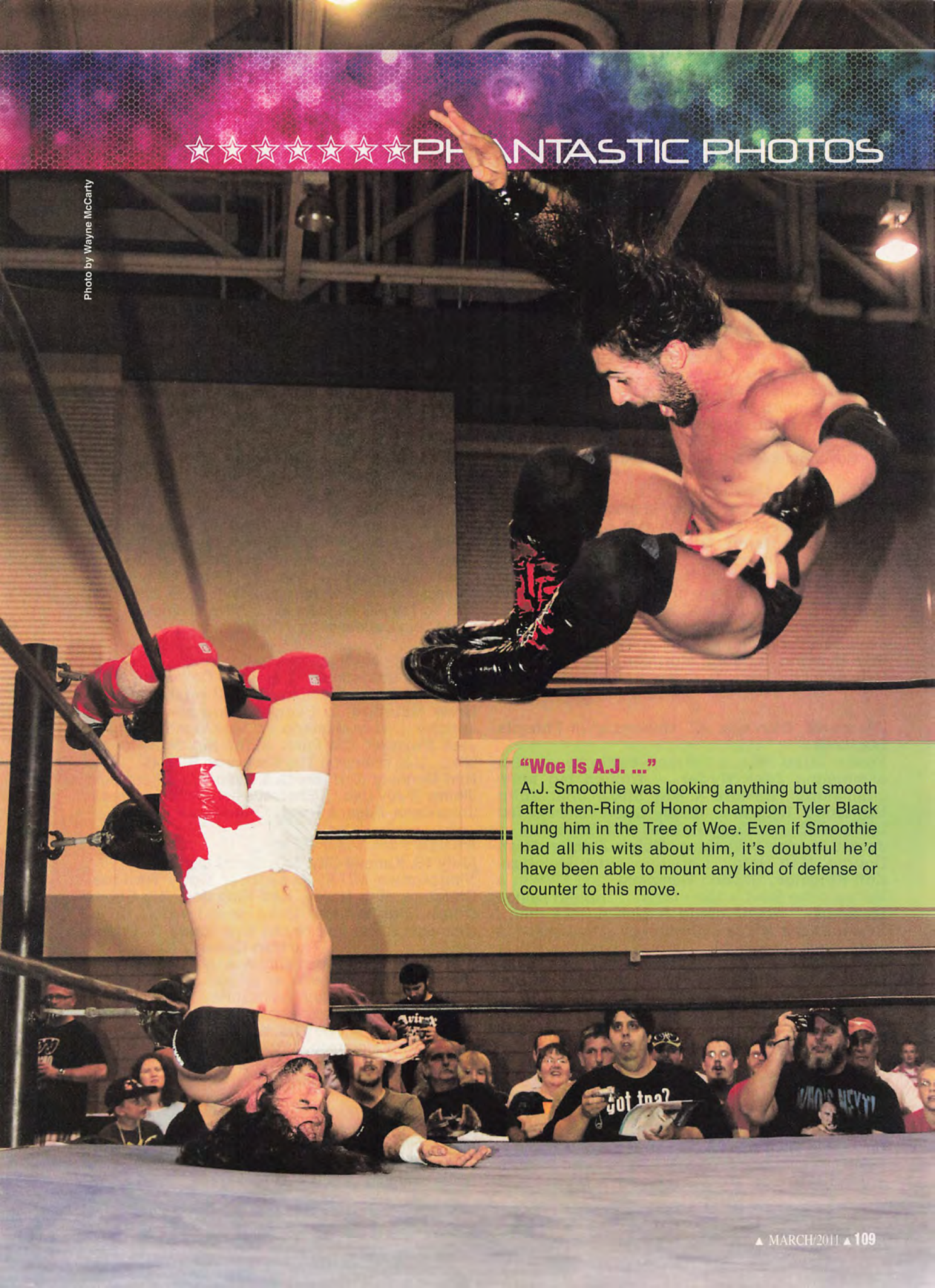


Photo by Wayne McCarty

"Woe Is A.J. ..."
A.J. Smoothie was looking anything but smooth after then-Ring of Honor champion Tyler Black hung him in the Tree of Woe. Even if Smoothie had all his wits about him, it's doubtful he'd have been able to mount any kind of defense or counter to this move.

PWI ACHIEVEMENT

ROYAL RUMBLE

[January 31, Atlanta GA, Philips Arena]
Gail Kim, **Kelly Kelly**, **Eve Torres**, & **The Bella Twins** defeated **Maryse**, **Alicia Fox**, **Jillian**, **Katie Lea Burchill**, & **Natalya** ... ECW champion **Christian** pinned **Ezekiel Jackson** ... U.S. champion **The Miz** pinned **MVP** ... WWE champion **Sheamus** beat **Randy Orton** by DQ ... **Mickie James** pinned Women's champion **Michelle McCool** for the title ... World champion **The Undertaker** pinned **Rey Mysterio Jr.** ... **Edge** won the Royal Rumble, last eliminating **John Cena**.

ELIMINATION CHAMBER

[February 21, St. Louis, MO, Scottrade Center]
John Cena beat WWE champion **Sheamus**, **Ted DiBiase Jr.**, **Randy Orton**, **Triple-H**, and **Kofi Kingston** to win the title ... **Batista** defeated WWE champion John Cena for the title ... Intercontinental champion **Drew McIntyre** pinned **Kane** ... **Michelle McCool** & **Layla** defeated **Maryse** & **Gail Kim** ... U.S. champion **The Miz** pinned **MVP** ... **Chris Jericho** beat World champion **The Undertaker**, **Rey Mysterio Jr.**, **John Morrison**, **CM Punk**, and **R-Truth** for the title.

WRESTLEMANIA 26

[March 28, Glendale, AZ, University of Phoenix Stadium]
Yoshi Tatsu won a 26-man battle royal, last eliminating **Zack Ryder** ... Unified tag team champions **The Miz** & **Big Show** beat **John Morrison** & **R-Truth** ... **Randy Orton** defeated **Ted DiBiase Jr.** and **Cody Rhodes** in a three-way ... **Jack Swagger** beat **Kane**, **Dolph Ziggler**, **Evan Bourne**, **Matt Hardy**, **Christian**, **Drew McIntyre**, **Kofi Kingston**, **Shelton Benjamin**, and **MVP** in a Money in the Bank ladder match ... **Triple-H** pinned **Sheamus** ... **Rey Mysterio Jr.** pinned **CM Punk** ... **Bret Hart** beat **Vince McMahon** by submission in a lumberjack streetfight ... World champion **Chris Jericho** pinned **Edge** ... **Vickie Guerrero**, **Layla**, **Michelle McCool**, **Alicia Fox**, & **Maryse** beat **Eve Torres**, **Kelly Kelly**, **Mickie James**, **Gail Kim**, & **Beth Phoenix** ... **John Cena** beat WWE champion **Batista** by submission for the title ... **The Undertaker** pinned **Shawn Michaels**.

EXTREME RULES

[April 25, Baltimore, MD, 1st Mariner Arena]
Kofi Kingston defeated **Dolph Ziggler** ... **The Hart Dynasty** (**D.H. Smith** & **Tyson Kidd**) defeated Unified tag team champions **The Miz** & **Big Show** in a non-title gauntlet match that also included **R-Truth** & **John Morrison** and **Mark Henry** & **MVP** ... **CM Punk** pinned **Rey Mysterio Jr.** ... **JTG** defeated **Shad Gaspard** in a strap match ... World champion **Jack Swagger** pinned **Randy Orton** in an Extreme Rules match ... **Sheamus** pinned **Triple-H** in a streetfight ... **Beth Phoenix** pinned Women's champion **Michelle McCool** for the title in a Make-Over match ... **Edge** pinned **Chris Jericho** in a steel cage match ... WWE champion **John Cena** defeated **Batista** by countout in a last-man-standing match.

OVER THE LIMIT

[May 23, Detroit, MI, Joe Louis Arena]
Kofi Kingston pinned Intercontinental champion **Drew McIntyre** for the title ... **Ted DiBiase Jr.** pinned **R-Truth** ... **Rey Mysterio Jr.** pinned **CM Punk** ... WWE tag team champions **The Hart Dynasty** (**D.H. Smith** & **Tyson Kidd**) defeated **The Miz** & **Chris Jericho** ... **Edge** vs. **Randy Orton** ended in a double-countout ... **The Big Show** beat World champion **Jack Swagger** by DQ ... Divas champion **Eve Torres** pinned **Maryse** ... WWE champion **John Cena** beat **Batista** in an "I Quit" match.

FATAL 4-WAY

[June 20, Uniondale, NY, Nassau Coliseum]
Intercontinental champion **Kofi Kingston** pinned **Drew McIntyre** ... **Evan Bourne** pinned **Chris Jericho** ... **Rey Mysterio Jr.** beat World champion **Jack Swagger**, **CM Punk**, & **The Big Show** for the title ... U.S. champion **The Miz** pinned **R-Truth** ... **The Hart Dynasty** (**D.H. Smith** & **Tyson Kidd**) defeated **Jimmy** & **Jey Uso** ... **Sheamus** beat WWE champion **John Cena**, **Edge**, & **Randy Orton** for the title.

MONEY IN THE BANK

[July 18, Kansas City, MO, Sprint Center]
Smackdown MITB: **Kane** beat **Cody Rhodes**, **Christian**, **Matt Hardy**, **Kofi Kingston**, **Big Show**, **Dolph Ziggler**, and **Drew McIntyre** ... Divas champion **Alicia Fox** pinned **Eve Torres** ... Unified tag team champions **The Hart Dynasty** (**D.H. Smith** & **Tyson Kidd**) defeated **Jimmy** & **Jey Uso** ... World champion **Rey Mysterio Jr.** pinned **Jack Swagger** ... Kane pinned World champion Rey Mysterio Jr. for the title ... Women's champion **Layla** pinned **Kelly Kelly** ... *Raw MITB:* **The Miz** beat **Randy Orton**, **Edge**, **John Morrison**, **Mark Henry**, **Chris Jericho**, **Evan Bourne**, & **Ted DiBiase Jr.** ... WWE champion **Sheamus** defeated **John Cena**.

SUMMERSLAM

[August 15, Los Angeles, CA, Staples Center]
Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** vs. **Kofi Kingston** ended in a no-contest ... **Melina** pinned Divas champion **Alicia Fox** for the title ... **Big Show**

beat **Luke Gallows**, **Joey Mercury**, & **CM Punk** in a handicap match ... **Randy Orton** beat WWE champion **Sheamus** by DQ ... World champion **Kane** pinned **Rey Mysterio Jr.** ... **Team RAW (John Cena, Daniel Bryan, Bret Hart, Edge, Chris Jericho, John Morrison, & R-Truth)** defeated **Nexus (Wade Barrett, Skip Sheffield, David Otunga, Heath Slater, Michael Tarver, Justin Gabriel, & Darren Young)** in an elimination match.

Photo by George Napolitano

Bret Hart vs. Heath Slater, Summerslam

NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS

[September 19, Rosemont, IL, Allstate Center]

Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** pinned **Kofi Kingston** ... **The Big Show** pinned **CM Punk** ... **Daniel Bryan** pinned U.S. champion **The Miz** for the title ... Women's champion **Michelle McCool** pinned Divas champion **Melina** in a Lumberjill match to unify the titles ... World champion **Kane** pinned **The Undertaker** in a no-hold-barred match ... **Drew McIntyre** & **Cody Rhodes** beat WWE tag team champions **The Hart Dynasty (D.H. Smith** & **Tyson Kidd)**, **Jimmy** & **Jey Uso**, and **Vladimir Kozlov** & **Santino Marella** for the title in a Tag Team Turmoil match ... **Randy Orton** beat WWE champion **Sheamus**, **Edge**, **Chris Jericho**, **John Cena**, and **Wade Barrett** in a Six-Pack Challenge match for the title.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

[October 24, Minneapolis, MN, Target Center]

U.S. champion **Daniel Bryan** beat Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** by submission in an non-title match ... **Nexus (John Cena** & **David Otunga)** beat WWE tag team champions **Cody Rhodes** & **Drew McIntyre** for the title ... **Ted DiBiase Jr.** pinned **Goldust** ... Divas champion **Layla** pinned **Natalya** ... World champion **Kane** beat **The Undertaker** in a Buried Alive match ... **Team Smackdown (The Big Show, Rey Mysterio Jr., Jack Swagger, Tyler Reks, Kofi Kingston, Alberto Del Rio,** & **Edge)** beat **Team Raw (The Miz, John Morrison, CM Punk, Ezekiel Jackson, Santino Marella, R-Truth,** & **Sheamus)** ... **Wade Barrett** beat WWE champion **Randy Orton** by DQ.

SURVIVOR SERIES

[November 21, Miami, FL, American Airlines Arena]

U.S. champion **Daniel Bryan** beat **Ted DiBiase Jr.** by submission ... **John Morrison** pinned **Sheamus** ... Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** pinned **Kaval** ... Elimination Match: **Team Mysterio (Rey Mysterio Jr., The Big Show, Kofi Kingston, Chris Masters,** and **MVP)** beat **Team Del Rio (Alberto Del Rio, Tyler Reks, Cody Rhodes, Drew McIntrye,** & **Jack Swagger)** ... **Natalya** beat Divas co-title holders **Michelle McCool** & **Layla** in a handicap match for the title ... World champion **Kane** vs. **Edge** ended in a draw ... WWE tag team champions **Nexus (Justin Gabriel** & **Heath Slater)** defeated **Vlaimir Kozlov** & **Santino Marella** ... WWE champion **Randy Orton** pinned **Wade Barrett (John Cena** served as referee).

TABLES, LADDERS, & CHAIRS

[December 19, Houston, TX, Toyota Center]

Intercontinental champion **Dolph Ziggler** beat **Jack Swagger** and **Kofi Kingston** in a ladder match ... **Natalya** & **Beth Phoenix** beat **Michelle McCool** & **Layla** in a tables match ... WWE tag team champions **Santino Marella** & **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Nexus (Heath Slater** & **Justin Gabriel)** by DQ ... **John Morrison** defeated **Sheamus** in ladder match ... WWE champion **The Miz** defeated **Randy Orton** in a tables match ... **Edge** beat World champion **Kane**, **Rey Mysterio Jr.**, and **Alberto Del Rio** in a ladder match for the title ... **John Cena** pinned **Wade Barrett** in a chairs match.

PWI ACHIEVEMENT

GENESIS

[January 17, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]
X division champion **Amazing Red** pinned **Brian Kendrick** ... **Sean Morley** pinned **Daniels** ... **Tara** beat Knockouts champion **ODB** for the title ... **Matt Morgan** & **Hernandez** beat World tag team champions **The British Invasion** (**Doug Williams** & **Brutus Magnus**) for the title ... **Desmond Wolfe** pinned **D'Angelo Dinero** ... **Beer Money Inc.** (**James Storm** & **Robert Roode**) defeated **Kevin Nash** & **Sean Waltman** ... **Mr. Anderson** beat **Abyss** ... World champion **AJ Styles** defeated **Kurt Angle**.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

[February 14, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]
Eight-Card Stud Tournament Quarterfinals: D'Angelo Dinero pinned **Desmond Wolfe** ... **Matt Morgan** pinned **Hernandez** ... **Mr. Anderson** pinned **Kurt Angle** ... **Abyss** beat **Mick Foley** ... **Semifinals:** D'Angelo Dinero pinned Matt Morgan ... Mr. Anderson pinned Abyss. **Final:** D'Angelo Dinero pinned Mr. Anderson ... **The Nasty Boys** (**Jerry Sags** & **Brian Knobs**) beat **Team 3-D** (**Brother Devon** & **Brother Ray**) ... World champion **AJ Styles** pinned **Samoa Joe**.

DESTINATION X

[March 21, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]
Kazarian beat **Brian Kendrick**, **Amazing Red**, and **Daniels** in a four-way ladder match ... Knockouts champion **Tara** pinned **Daffney** ... Global champion **Rob Terry** pinned **Brutus Magnus** ... **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) beat **Generation Me** (**Max** & **Jeremy Buck**) ... **Sean Waltman** & **Scott Hall** defeated **Kevin Nash** & **Eric Young** ... X division champion **Doug Williams** pinned **Shannon Moore** ... World tag team champions **Matt Morgan** & **Hernandez** beat **Beer Money Inc.** (**James Storm** & **Robert Roode**) ... **Kurt Angle** defeated **Mr. Anderson** by submission ... World champion **AJ Styles** vs. **Abyss** ended in a no-contest.

LOCKDOWN

[April 18, St. Charles, MO, Family Arena]
Rob Van Dam beat **James Storm** ... **Homicide** beat **Alex Shelley**, **Chris Sabin**, and **Brian Kendrick** in an Xscape match ... **Kevin Nash** beat **Eric Young** ... **The Beautiful People** (**Velvet Sky** & **Madison Rayne**) defeated Knockouts champion **Angelina Love** & **Tara**; Rayne won the Knockouts title by pinning Tara ... **Kazarian** beat **Shannon Moore** and Homicide to win the vacant X division title ... **Team 3-D** (**Brother Devon** & **Brother Ray**) defeated **Kevin Nash** & **Scott Hall** ... **Kurt Angle** defeated **Mr. Anderson** ... World champion **AJ Styles** beat **D'Angelo Dinero** ... **Team Hogan** (**Abyss**, **Jeff Jarrett**, **Jeff Hardy**, & Rob Van Dam) defeated **Team Flair** (**Sting**, **Robert Roode**, James Storm, & **Desmond Wolfe**).

SACRIFICE

[May 16, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]
The Motor City Machine Guns (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) beat **Beer Money Inc.** (**James Storm** & **Robert Roode**) in a number-one contender's match ... Global champion **Rob Terry** pinned **Orlando Jordan** ... **Doug Williams** pinned X division champion **Kazarian** for the title ... Knockouts champion **Madison Rayne** pinned **Tara** ... World tag team champions **Scott Hall** & **Kevin Nash** beat **Ink Inc.** (**Jesse Neal** & **Shannon Moore**) ... **Abyss** pinned **Desmond Wolfe** ... **Jeff Hardy** pinned **Mr. Kennedy** ... **Sting** pinned **Jeff Jarrett** ... World champion **Rob Van Dam** pinned **AJ Styles**.

SLAMMIVERSARY

[June 13, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]
Kurt Angle beat **Kazarian** by submission ... X division champion **Doug Williams** pinned **Brian Kendrick** ... Knockouts champion **Madison Rayne** pinned **Roxxi** ... **Jesse Neal** pinned **Brother Ray** ... **Matt Morgan** beat **Hernandez** by DQ ... **Abyss** pinned **Desmond Wolfe** in a Monster's Ball match ... **Jay Lethal** pinned **AJ Styles** ... **Jeff Hardy** & **Mr. Anderson** defeated **Beer Money Inc.** (**James Storm** & **Robert Roode**) ... World champion **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Sting**.

VICTORY ROAD

[July 11, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]
X division champion **Douglas Williams** beat **Brian Kendrick** in an Ultimate X match ... **Brother Ray** beat **Jesse Neal** and **Brother Devon** in a three-way ... **Angelina Love** defeated Knockouts champion **Madison Rayne** by DQ to win the title ... **AJ Styles** & **Kazarian** beat **Rob Terry** & **Samoa Joe** ... **Hernandez** defeated **Matt Morgan** in a cage match ... **Jay Lethal** defeated **Ric Flair** by submission ... **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) beat **Beer Money Inc.** (**James Storm** & **Robert Roode**) for the vacant World tag team title ... **Kurt Angle** beat **D'Angelo Dinero** by submission ... World champion **Rob Van Dam** beat **Abyss**, **Jeff Hardy**, and **Mr. Anderson** in a four-way.

★★★PAY-PER-VIEW CARDS: TNA

HARD JUSTICE

[August 8, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]

The F.B.I. (**Little Guido**, **Tony [Mama] Luke**, & **Tracy Smothers**) beat **Kid Kash**, **Simon Diamond**, & **Johnny Swinger** ... **2 Cold Scorpio** pinned **C.W. Anderson** ... **Stevie Richards** pinned **P.J. Polaco** (**Justin Credible**) ... **Rhino** beat **Brother Runt** and **Al Snow** in a three-way ... **Team 3-D** (**Brother Devon** & **Brother Ray**) defeated **Kahoneys** (**Mahoney**) & **Axl Rotten** ... **Raven** pinned **Tommy Dreamer** ... World champion **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Sabu**.

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

AJ Styles vs. Jay Lethal, Slammiversary

NO SURRENDER

[September 5, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]

World tag team champions **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) defeated **Generation Me** (**Max** & **Jeremy Buck**) ... X division champion **Douglas Williams** pinned **Sabu** ... **Velvet Sky** pinned **Madison Rayne** ... **Abyss** pinned **Rhino** in a falls-count-anywhere match ... **Jeff Jarrett** & **Samoa Joe** beat **Kevin Nash** & **Sting** ... **AJ Styles** beat **Tommy Dreamer** in an "I Quit" match ... **World championship tournament semifinals: Jeff Hardy** vs. **Kurt Angle** ended in a time-limit draw ... **Mr. Anderson** pinned **D'Angelo Dinero**.

BOUND FOR GLORY

[October 10, Daytona Beach, FL, Ocean Center]

World tag team champions **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) defeated **Generation Me** (**Max** & **Jeremy Buck**) ... **Tara** beat Knockouts champion **Angelina Love**, **Velvet Sky**, and **Madison Rayne** in a four-way for the title ... **Ink Inc.** (**Jesse Neal** & **Shannon Moore**) beat **Eric Young** & **Orlando Jordan** ... X division champion **Jay Lethal** pinned **Douglas Williams** ... **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Abyss** in a Monster's Ball match ... **Kevin Nash**, **D'Angelo Dinero**, & **Sting** beat **Samoa Joe** & **Jeff Jarrett** in a handicap match ... **Tommy Dreamer**, **Rhino**, **Sabu**, **Stevie Richards**, & **Raven** defeated **AJ Styles**, **James Storm**, **Robert Roode**, **Matt Morgan**, & **Kazarian** in a Lethal Lockdown match ... **Jeff Hardy** defeated **Mr. Anderson** and **Kurt Angle** in a three-way to claim the vacant World title.

TURNING POINT

[November 7, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]

Robbie E pinned X division champion **Jay Lethal** for the title ... **Mickie James** vs. **Tara** ended in a no-contest ... World tag team champions **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) defeated **Team 3-D** (**Brother Devon** & **Brother Ray**) ... **Rob Van Dam** pinned **Tommy Dreamer** ... **Fortune** (**AJ Styles**, **Kazarian**, **Douglas Williams**, **James Strong**, & **Robert Roode**) defeated **EV2.0** (**Stevie Richards**, **Rhino**, **Sabu**, **Raven**, & **Brian Kendrick**) ... **Abyss** pinned **D'Angelo Dinero** in a lumberjack match ... **Jeff Jarrett** defeated **Samoa Joe** by referee's stoppage ... World champion **Jeff Hardy** pinned **Matt Morgan**.

FINAL RESOLUTION

[December 5, Orlando, FL, Impact Zone]

Beer Money Inc. (**James Storm** & **Robert Roode**) beat **Ink Inc.** (**Jesse Neal** & **Shannon Moore**) ... **Tara** pinned **Mickie James** in a fall-count-anywhere match ... X division champion **Robbie E** beat **Jay Lethal** by DQ ... **Rob Van Dam** defeated **Rhino** in a first-blood match ... **Douglas Williams** pinned TV champion **AJ Styles** for the title ... World tag team champions **The Motor City Machine Guns** (**Chris Sabin** & **Alex Shelley**) defeated **Generation Me** (**Max** & **Jeremy Buck**) ... **Abyss** beat **D'Angelo Dinero** in a casket match ... **Jeff Jarrett** defeated **Samoa Joe** in a submission match by referee's decision ... World champion **Jeff Hardy** pinned **Matt Morgan**.

PWI ACHIEVEMENT ☆☆☆☆☆☆

This is a complete listing of all *PWI* Achievement Award winners. We've also provided a comprehensive listing of runners-up (which were first reported in 1976) for all awards.

Award winners were first presented annually in the pages of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED effective with our March 1982 issue. Prior to that, awards appeared in *Sports Review Wrestling* (1980 awards in the March 1981 edition), *Sports Review Wrestling Annual* (1977-'79 awards in Spring 1978, '79, and '80 editions), and *Victory Sports Series Wrestling Annual* and *Yearbook* editions (1972-'76 awards in issues #4, 7, 11, 14, and 18).

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

2009: Randy Orton
Runners-Up: 1—John Cena, 2—Chris Jericho, 3—Kurt Angle

2008: Triple-H
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle, 2—Randy Orton, 3—Samoa Joe

2007: John Cena
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle, 2—Batista, 3—Randy Orton

2006: John Cena
Runners-up: 1—Samoa Joe, 2—Rey Mysterio Jr., 3—Edge

2005: Batista
Runners-up: 1—John Cena, 2—AJ Styles, 3—Samoa Joe

2004: Chris Benoit
Runners-up: 1—Randy Orton, 2—Eddie Guerrero, 3—AJ Styles

2003: Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Brock Lesnar, 2—Triple-H, 3—AJ Styles

2002: Brock Lesnar
Runners-up: 1—Rob Van Dam, 2—Triple-H, 3—The Undertaker

2001: Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle, 2—The Rock, 3—Rob Van Dam

2000: The Rock
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H, 2—Booker T, 3—Kurt Angle

1999: Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—The Rock, 2—Sting, 3—Tazz

1998: Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—Bill Goldberg, 2—Dallas Page, 3—Rocky Maivia

1997: Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Dallas Page

1996: The Giant
Runners-up: 1—Shawn Michaels, 2—Ric Flair, 3—Ahmed Johnson

1995: Diesel
Runners-up: 1—Shawn Michaels, 2—Sting, 3—Hulk Hogan

1994: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Bret Hart, 2—Razor Ramon, 3—Ric Flair

1993: Big Van Vader
Runners-up: 1—Bret Hart, 2—Shawn Michaels, 3—Yokozuna

1992: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Ron Simmons, 2—Rick Rude, 3—Bret Hart

1991: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Lex Luger, 2—Bret Hart, 3—Sting

1990: Sting
Runners-up: 1—Ultimate Warrior, 2—Hulk Hogan, 3—Lex Luger

1989: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Lex Luger, 3—Rick Steamboat

1988: Randy Savage
Runners-up: 1—Jerry Lawler, 2—Lex Luger, 3—Ric Flair

1987: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Randy Savage, 3—Steve Williams

1986: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Randy Savage, 3—Nikita Koloff

1985: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Rick Martel, 3—Sgt. Slaughter

1984: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Kerry Von Erich, 3—Rick Martel

1983: Harley Race
Runners-up: 1—Nick Bockwinkel, 2—Andre the Giant, 3—Bob Backlund

1982: Bob Backlund
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Hulk Hogan, 3—Jimmy Snuka

1981: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund, 2—Tommy Rich, 3—Dusty Rhodes

1980: Bob Backlund
Runners-up: 1—Harley Race, 2—Verne Gagne, 3—The Iron Sheik

1979: Harley Race
Runners-up: 1—Dusty Rhodes, 2—Jimmy Snuka, 3—Bob Backlund

1978: Dusty Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund, 2—Rick Steamboat, 3—Harley Race

1977: Dusty Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—Superstar Graham, 2—Bob Backlund, 3—Harley Race

1976: Terry Funk
Runners-up: 1—Bruno Sammartino, 2—Nick Bockwinkel, 3—Paul Jones

1975: Mr. Wrestling II

1974: Bruno Sammartino

1973: Jack Brisco

1972: Pedro Morales

Sting: 1990

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

2009: Team 3-D
Runners-Up: 1—Beer Money Inc., 2—Chris Jericho & The Big Show, 3—DeGeneration-X

2008: Beer Money Inc.
Runners-up: 1—The Miz & John Morrison, 2—Cody Rhodes & Ted DiBiase Jr., 3—LAX

2007: Paul London & Brian Kendrick
Runners-up 1—Team 3-D, 2—Jay & Mark Briscoe, 3—Deuce & Domino

2006: AJ Styles & Christopher Daniels
Runners-up: 1—Paul London & Brian Kendrick, 2—DeGeneration-X, 3—The

PWI SUPERSTATS

Big Show & Kane

2005: M-N-M
Runners-up: 1—The Naturals, 2—Animal & Heidenreich, 3—America's Most Wanted

2004: America's Most Wanted
Runners-up: 1—La Resistance, 2—Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley, 3—Charlie Haas & Rico

2003: Shelton Benjamin & Charlie Haas
Runners-up: 1—America's Most Wanted, 2—Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley, 3—Eddie & Chavo Guerrero Jr.

2002: Billy Gunn & Chuck Palumbo
Runners-up: 1—Booker T & Goldust, 2—Jamal & Rosey, 3—Kurt Angle & Chris Benoit

2001: Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley
Runners-up: 1—Kane & The Undertaker, 2—The Hardy Boyz, 3—The Acolytes

2000: The Hardy Boyz
Runners-up: 1—Christian & Edge, 2—Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley, 3—Kronik

1999: Kane & X-Pac
Runners-up: 1—The Hardy Boyz, 2—Harlem Heat, 3—Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley

1998: Billy Gunn & Jesse James
Runners-up: 1—Sabu & Rob Van Dam, 2—Kane & Mankind, 3—Kane & The Undertaker

1997: Scott Hall & Kevin Nash
Runners-up: 1—Rick & Scott Steiner, 2—The Road Warriors, 3—Lex Luger & The Giant

1996: Harlem Heat
Runners-up: 1—The Eliminators, 2—Rick & Scott Steiner, 3—The Gangstas

1995: Harlem Heat
Runners-up: 1—The Smokin' Gunns, 2—Owen Hart & Yokozuna, 3—Rick & Scott Steiner

1994: The Nasty Boys
Runners-up: 1—The Headshrinkers, 2—Public Enemy, 3—The Rock 'n' Roll Express

1993: Rick & Scott Steiner
Runners-up: 1—The Hollywood Blonds, 2—Money Inc., 3—The Heavenly Bodies

1992: Terry Gordy & Steve Williams
Runners-up: 1—The Natural Disasters, 2—Rick & Scott Steiner, 3—Barry Windham & Dustin Rhodes

1991: Larry Zbyszko & Arn Anderson
Runners-up: 1—Legion of Doom, 2—Rick & Scott Steiner, 3—Robert Fuller & Jeff Jarrett

1990: Rick & Scott Steiner
Runners-up: 1—Demolition, 2—Doom, 3—Legion of Doom

1989: Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson
Runners-up: 1—Demolition, 2—The Road Warriors, 3—Jim Garvin & Michael Hayes

1988: The Road Warriors
Runners-up: 1—The Midnight Express, 2—Demolition, 3—Tully Blanchard & Arn Anderson

1987: The Midnight Express
Runners-up: 1—The Hart Foundation, 2—The Road Warriors, 3—The Rock 'n' Roll Express

1986: The Rock 'n' Roll Express
Runners-up: 1—The Road Warriors, 2—The British Bulldogs, 3—The Midnight Rockers

1985: The Road Warriors
Runners-up: 1—Ted DiBiase & Steve Williams, 2—Ivan & Nikita Koloff, 3—The British Bulldogs

1984: The Road Warriors
Runners-up: 1—Kerry, Kevin, & Mike Von Erich, 2—The Fabulous Ones, 3—The Rock 'n' Roll Express

1983: The Road Warriors
Runners-up: 1—Kerry, Kevin, & David Von Erich, 2—Michael Hayes, Terry Gordy, & Buddy Roberts, 3—Jack & Jerry Brisco

1982: Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell
Runners-up: 1—Mr. Fuji & Mr. Saito, 2—The Freebirds, 3—Ole Anderson & Stan Hansen

1981: The Fabulous Freebirds
Runners-up: 1—Rick Martel & Tony Garea, 2—Mr. Fuji & Mr. Saito, 3—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell

1980: Jimmy Snuka & Ray Stevens
Runners-up: 1—Mr. Wrestling & Mr. Wrestling II, 2—The Samoans, 3—Verne Gagne & Mad Dog Vachon

1979: Ivan Putski & Tito Santana
Runners-up: 1—Jerry & Johnny Valiant, 2—Paul Jones & Baron Von Raschke, 3—The Spoiler & Mark Lewin

1978: Rick Steamboat & Paul Jones
Runners-up: 1–The Yukon Lumberjacks, 2—Mike Graham & Steve Keirn, 3—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell

Larry Zbyszko & Arn Anderson: 1991

1977: Gene & Ole Anderson
Runners-up: 1—Mr. Fuji & Prof. Tanaka, 2—Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell, 3—Ric Flair & Greg Valentine

1976: The Executioners
Runners-up: 1—Gene & Ole Anderson, 2—Billy White Wolf & Chief Jay Strongbow, 3—Jimmy & Johnny Valiant

1975: Gene & Ole Anderson

1974: Jimmy & Johnny Valiant

1973: Nick Bockwinkel & Ray Stevens

1972: Bruiser & Crusher

MATCH OF THE YEAR

2009: Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels
Runners-Up: 1—CM Punk vs. Jeff Hardy, 2—John Cena vs. Randy Orton vs. Triple-H, 3—Team 3-D vs. Beer Money Inc.

2008: Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels
Runners up: 1—Kurt Angle vs. Samoa Joe, 2—Edge vs. Undertaker, 3—Erick Stevens vs. Roderick Strong

2007: John Cena vs. Shawn Michaels
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle vs. Samoa Joe, 2—John Cena vs. Shawn Michaels, 3—Nigel McGuinness vs. Takeshi Morishima

2006: Shawn Michaels vs. Vince McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle vs. Undertaker, 2—Kurt Angle vs. Samoa Joe, 3—Edge vs. Mick Foley

2005: Kurt Angle vs. Shawn Michaels
Runners-up: 1—AJ Styles vs. Samoa Joe vs. Christopher Daniels,

PWI ACHIEVEMENT ☆☆☆☆☆☆

2—Hulk Hogan vs. Shawn Michaels, 3—John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

2004: Triple-H vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Benoit
Runners-up: 1—Chris Benoit vs. Randy Orton, 2—Randy Orton vs. Cactus Jack, 3—Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

2003: Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit, 2—Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle, 3—Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho

2002: Hulk Hogan vs. The Rock
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H vs. Shawn Michaels, 2—Eddie Guerrero vs. Rob Van Dam, 3—Kurt Angle & Chris Benoit vs. Edge & Rey Mysterio Jr.

2001: Christian & Edge vs. The Hardy Boyz vs. The Dudley Boyz
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin vs. Triple-H, 2—The Rock vs. Chris Jericho, 3—Jeff Hardy vs. Rob Van Dam

2000: Christian & Edge vs. The Hardy Boyz vs. The Dudley Boyz
Runners-up: 1—Chris Jericho vs. Triple-H, 2—Christian & Edge vs. The Hardy Boyz vs. The Dudley Boyz, 3—Super Crazy vs. Yoshihiro Tajiri

1999: The Rock vs. Mankind
Runners-up: 1—Rob Van Dam vs. Jerry Lynn, 2—Steve Austin vs. Vince McMahon, 3—The Rock vs. Steve Austin

Shawn Michaels vs. Marty Jannetty: 1993

1998: The Undertaker vs. Mankind
Runners-up: 1—Shawn Michaels vs. Steve Austin, 2—Bill Goldberg vs. Hollywood Hogan, 3—Taz vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

1997: Bret Hart vs. Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—Eddie Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio Jr., 2—Shawn Michaels vs. The Undertaker, 3—Terry Funk vs. The Sandman vs. Stevie Richards

1996: Shawn Michaels vs. Bret Hart
Runners-up: 1—Shawn Michaels vs. Mankind, 2—Sabu vs. Rob Van Dam, 3—War Games

1995: Diesel vs. Shawn Michaels
Runners-up: 1—Jeff Jarrett vs. Shawn Michaels, 2—Harlem Heat vs. The Nasty Boys, 3—Psicosis vs. Rey Mysterio Jr.

1994: Shawn Michaels vs. Razor Ramon
Runners-up: 1—The Nasty Boys vs. Cactus Jack & Maxx Payne, 2—Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan, 3—Alundra Blayze vs. Bull Nakano

1993: Shawn Michaels vs. Marty Jannetty
Runners-up: 1—Rick & Scott Steiner vs. The Heavenly Bodies, 2—Rick Rude vs. Dustin Rhodes, 3—Cactus Jack vs. Big Van Vader

1992: Davey Boy Smith vs. Bret Hart
Runners-up: 1—Brian Pillman vs. Jushin Liger, 2—Royal Rumble, 3—Rick Steamboat vs. Rick Rude

1991: The Steiners vs. Sting & Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Bret Hart vs. Curt Hennig, 2—Lex Luger vs. Ron Simmons, 3—Cactus Jack vs. Eddie Gilbert

1990: Hulk Hogan vs. Ultimate Warrior
Runners-up: 1—Sting vs. Ric Flair, 2—Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake, 3—Royal Rumble

1989: Ric Flair vs. Rick Steamboat
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan vs. Randy Savage, 2—Ric Flair vs. Rick Steamboat, 3—Eric Embry vs. P.Y. Chu-Hi

1988: Andre the Giant vs. Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Sting vs. Ric Flair, 2—Jerry Lawler vs. Curt Hennig, 3—Ultimate Warrior vs. Honky Tonk Man

1987: Rick Steamboat vs. Randy Savage
Runners-up: 1—War Games: The Match Beyond I, 2—Hulk Hogan vs. Andre the Giant, 3—Ronnie Garvin vs. Ric Flair

1986: Dusty Rhodes vs. Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—The British Bulldogs vs. Greg Valentine & Brutus Beefcake, 2—The Road Warriors vs. Ronnie Garvin & Magnum T.A., 3—Hulk Hogan vs. Paul Orndorff

1985: Hulk Hogan & Mr. T vs. Roddy Piper & Paul Orndorff
Runners-up: 1—The Road Warriors vs. Ivan & Nikita Koloff, 2—Ric Flair vs. Nikita Koloff, 3—Rick Martel vs. Bob Backlund

1984: Kerry Von Erich vs. Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Rick Martel vs. Jumbo Tsuruta, 2—Hulk Hogan vs. The Iron Sheik, 3—Ric Flair vs. Rick Steamboat

1983: Harley Race vs. Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Rick Steamboat & Jay Youngblood vs. Sgt. Slaughter & Don Kernodle, 2—Don Muraco vs. Pedro Morales, 3—Tommy Rich vs. Buzz Sawyer

1982: Bob Backlund vs. Jimmy Snuka
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund vs. Ric Flair, 2—Nick Bockwinkel vs. Otto Wanz, 3—Nick Bockwinkel vs. Otto Wanz

1981: Andre the Giant vs. Killer Khan
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair vs. Dusty Rhodes, 2—Bob Backlund vs. Don Muraco, 3—Michael Hayes vs. Terry Gordy

1980: Bruno Sammartino vs. Larry Zbyszko
Runners-up: 1—Andre the Giant vs. Hulk Hogan, 2—Verne Gagne vs. Nick Bockwinkel, 3—Dusty Rhodes vs. Bob Backlund

1979: Dusty Rhodes vs. Harley Race
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund vs. Pat Patterson, 2—Nick Bockwinkel vs. Bob Backlund, 3—Mr. Wrestling II vs. Ernie Ladd

1978: Bob Backlund vs. Superstar Graham
Runners-up: 1—Blackjack Mulligan vs. Ric Flair, 2—Dusty Rhodes vs. Superstar Graham 3—Rick Steamboat vs. Ric Flair

1977: Superstar Graham vs. Bruno Sammartino
Runners-up: 1—Dusty Rhodes vs. Superstar Graham, 2—Andre the

Giant vs. Ric Flair, 3—Greg Gagne vs. Bob Backlund

1976: Bruno Sammartino vs. Stan Hansen
Runners-up: 1—Terry Funk vs. Rocky Johnson, 2—Nick Bockwinkel vs. Baron Von Raschke, 3—Andre the Giant vs. Abdullah the Butcher

1975: Bruno Sammartino vs. Spiros Arion

1974: Dory Funk Jr. vs. Jack Brisco

1973: Harley Race vs. Dory Funk Jr.

1972: Bruno Sammartino wins 22-man Los Angeles battle royal

FEUD OF THE YEAR

2009: Randy Orton vs. Triple-H
Runners-Up: 1—CM Punk vs. Jeff Hardy, 2—Main Event Mafia vs. Frontline, 3—Kurt Angle vs. Jeff Jarrett

2008: Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle vs. AJ Styles, 2—Edge vs. Undertaker, 3—LAX vs. Beer Money Inc.

2007: Samoa Joe vs. Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Batista vs. The Undertaker, 2—John Cena vs. Shawn Michaels, 3—John Cena vs. Randy Orton

2006: John Cena vs. Edge
Runners-up: 1—DeGeneration-X vs. The McMahons, 2—Sting vs. Jeff Jarrett, 3—Trish Stratus vs. Mickie James

2005: Matt Hardy vs. Edge & Lita
Runners-up: 1—AJ Styles vs. Christopher Daniels, 2—Eddie Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio Jr., 3—Batista vs. Triple-H

2004: Triple-H vs. Chris Benoit
Runners-up: 1—Mick Foley vs. Randy Orton, 2—Chris Jericho vs. Christian & Trish Stratus, 3—Matt Hardy vs.Kane

2003: Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan vs. Vince McMahon, 2—Steve Austin vs. Eric Bischoff, 3—Jeff Jarrett vs. Raven

2002: Eric Bischoff vs. Stephanie McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle vs. Edge, 2—Triple-H vs. Stephanie McMahon, 3—Molly Holly vs. Trish Stratus

2001: Shane McMahon vs. Vince McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Booker T vs. The Rock, 2—Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle, 3—Edge vs. Christian

2000: Triple-H vs. Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H vs. The Rock, 2—Booker T vs. Jeff Jarrett, 3—Christian & Edge vs. Hardy Boyz

1999: Steve Austin vs. Vince McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H vs. The Rock, 2—Jerry Lynn vs. Rob Van Dam, 3—Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan

1998: Steve Austin vs. Vince McMahon
Runners-up: 1—NWO Wolfpac vs. NWO Hollywood, 2—Ric Flair vs. Eric Bischoff, 3—Rocky Maivia vs. Ken Shamrock

1997: Randy Savage vs. Dallas Page
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin vs. Bret Hart, 2—Hulk Hogan vs. Roddy Piper, 3—Sabu vs. Taz

1996: Eric Bischoff vs. Vince McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage, 2—Mankind vs. The Undertaker, 3—Jamie Dundee vs. Wolfie D

1995: Axl Rotten vs. Ian Rotten
Runners-up: 1—Harlem Heat vs. The Nasty Boys, 2—Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon, 3—Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage

1994: Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan vs. Ric Flair, 2—Randy Savage vs. Crush, 3—Sabu vs. Terry Funk

1993: Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler
Runners-up: 1—Rick Rude vs. Dustin Rhodes, 2—Cactus Jack vs. Big Van Vader, 3—Tony Anthony vs. Tracey Smothers

1992: The Moondogs vs. Jeff Jarrett & Jerry Lawler
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair vs. Randy Savage, 2—Ultimate Warrior vs. Papa Shango, 3—Rick Rude vs. Rick Steamboat

1991: Ultimate Warrior vs. The Undertaker
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan vs. Sgt. Slaughter, 2—Sting vs. Cactus Jack & Abdullah the Butcher, 3—Lex Luger vs. Ron Simmons

1990: Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake, 2—Ultimate Warrior vs. Rick Rude, 3—Chris Adams vs. Steve Austin

1989: Ric Flair vs. Terry Funk

Terry Funk vs. Ric Flair: 1989

Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan vs. Randy Savage, 2—Akbar's Army vs. Eric Embry, 3—Roddy Piper vs. Rick Rude

1988: Ric Flair vs. Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Rick Rude vs. Jake Roberts, 2—Kerry Von Erich vs. Jerry Lawler, 3—Hulk Hogan & Randy Savage vs. Ted DiBiase & Andre the Giant

1987: Four Horsemen vs. Superpowers & Road Warriors
Runners-up: 1—Randy Savage vs. Rick Steamboat, 2—Jerry Lawler vs. Tommy Rich & Austin Idol, 3—Brian Adias vs. Kevin Von Erich

1986: Hulk Hogan vs. Paul Orndorff
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair vs. Dusty Rhodes, 2—The Sheepherders vs. The Fantastics, 3—The Midnight Express vs. The Rock 'n' Roll Express

PWI ACHIEVEMENT

MOST POPULAR WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

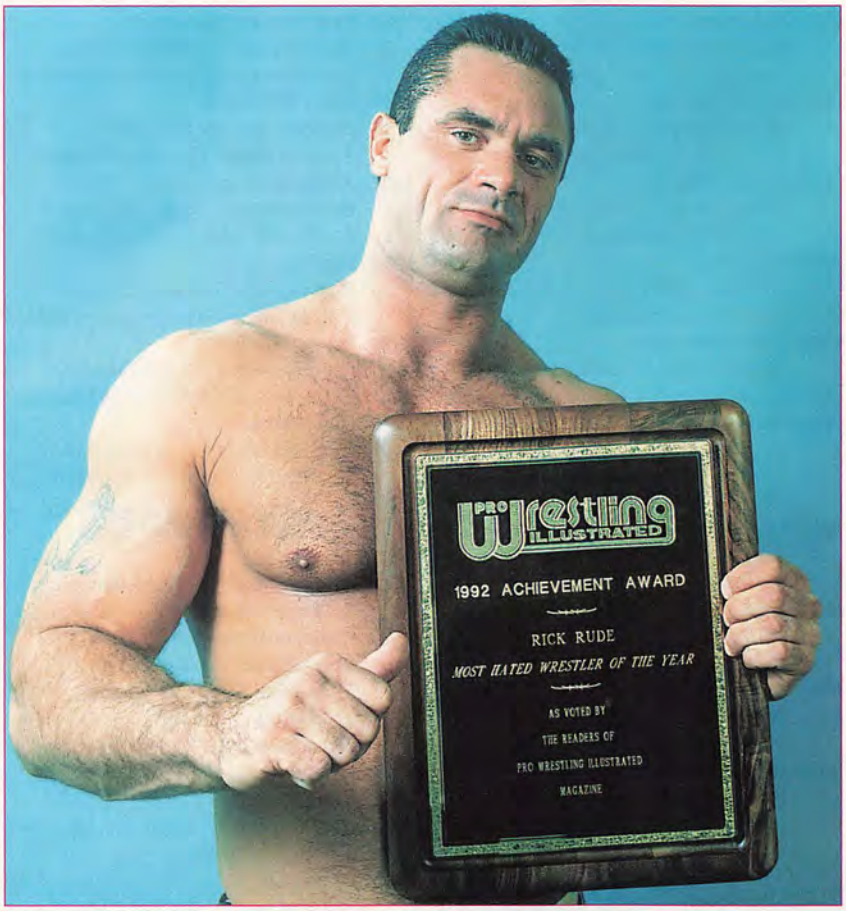
2009: Jeff Hardy
Runners-Up: 1—John Cena, 2—Sting, 3—The Undertaker
2008: Jeff Hardy
Runners-up: 1—Shawn Michaels, 2—Samoa Joe, 3—Undertaker
2007: John Cena
Runners-up: 1—The Undertaker, 2—Sting, 3—CM Punk
2006: Samoa Joe
Runners-up: 1—John Cena, 2—Rey Mysterio Jr., 3—Sting
2005: John Cena
Runners-up: 1—Batista, 2—AJ Styles, 3—Rey Mysterio Jr.
2004: John Cena
Runners-up: 1—Chris Benoit, 2—Eddie Guerrero, 3—Eugene
2003: Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—Rob Van Dam, 3—Rey Mysterio Jr.
2002: Rob Van Dam
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Booker T, 3—The Rock
2001: Rob Van Dam
Runners-up: 1—The Rock, 2—Chris Jericho, 3—Kurt Angle
2000: The Rock
Runners-up: 1—Rob Van Dam, 2—Chris Jericho, 3—Bill Goldberg
1999: The Rock
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—Bill Goldberg, 3—Mankind
1998: Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—Bill Goldberg, 2—Rocky Maivia, 3—Dallas Page
1997: Sting
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—Ric Flair, 3—Dallas Page
1996: Shawn Michaels
Runners-up: 1—Randy Savage, 2—Sid Vicious, 3—The Undertaker
1995: Shawn Michaels
Runners-up: 1—Sting, 2—Diesel, 3—Hulk Hogan
1994: Sting
Runners-up: 1—Bret Hart, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Hulk Hogan
1993: Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Sting, 2—Bret Hart, 3—Dustin Rhodes
1992: Sting
Runners-up: 1—The Ultimate Warrior, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Ron Simmons
1991: Sting
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Sid Justice, 3—Rick & Scott Steiner
1990: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Sting, 2—Ultimate Warrior, 3—Lex Luger
1989: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Sting, 3—The Ultimate Warrior
1988: Randy Savage
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Sting, 3—Lex Luger
1987: Dusty Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Randy Savage, 3—Nikita Koloff
1986: Roddy Piper
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Rick Morton, 3—Nikita Koloff
1985: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Magnum T.A., 2—Kerry Von Erich, 3—Tito Santana
1984: Kerry Von Erich
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Dusty Rhodes, 3—Sgt. Slaughter
1983: Jimmy Snuka
Runners-up: 1—Dusty Rhodes, 2—David Von Erich, 3—Junkyard Dog
1982: Andre the Giant
Runners-up: 1—Tommy Rich, 2—Hulk Hogan, 3—Dusty Rhodes
1981: Tommy Rich
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund, 2—Andre the Giant, 3—Dusty Rhodes
1980: Mr. Wrestling II
Runners-up: 1—Dusty Rhodes, 2—Andre the Giant, 3—Bruno Sammartino
1979: Dusty Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—Andre the Giant, 2—Ivan Putski, 3—Mr. Wrestling II
1978: Dusty Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—Andre the Giant, 2—Rick Steamboat, 3—Bob Backlund
1977: Andre the Giant
Runners-up: 1—Dusty Rhodes, 2—Bob Backlund, 3—Mil Mascaras
1976: Wahoo McDaniel
Runners-up: 1—Chief Jay Strongbow, 2—Mr. Wrestling II, 3—Ivan Putski
1975: Mil Mascaras
1974: Billy Robinson
1973: Chief Jay Strongbow
1972: Jack Brisco/Fred Curry (tie)

Randy Savage: 1988

MOST HATED WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

2009: Randy Orton
Runners-Up: 1—CM Punk, 2—Chris Jericho, 3—Kurt Angle
2008: Chris Jericho
Runners-up: 1—Edge, 2—Randy Orton, 3—Kurt Angle
2007: Randy Orton
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle, 2—The Great Khali, 3—Robert Roode
2006: Edge
Runners-up: 1—Jeff Jarrett, 2—Randy Orton, 3—King Booker

PWI SUPERSTATS



Rick Rude: 1992

2005: Triple-H
Runners-up: 1—Edge, 2—Jeff Jarrett, 3—Muhammad Hassan

2004: Triple-H
Runners-up: 1—John Bradshaw Layfield, 2—Kurt Angle, 3—Jeff Jarrett

2003: Triple-H
Runners-up: 1—Kane, 2—Vince McMahon, 3—Test

2002: Chris Jericho
Runners-up: 1—The Un-Americans, 2—Kurt Angle, 3—Triple-H

2001: Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—Booker T, 2—Kurt Angle, 3—Shane McMahon

2000: Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H, 2—Steven Richards, 3—Jeff Jarrett

1999: Dallas Page
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H, 2—The Undertaker, 3—The Dudley Boyz

1998: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Vince McMahon, 2—Eric Bischoff, 3—Bret Hart

1997: Bret Hart
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Owen Hart, 3—Curt Hennig

1996: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Goldust, 2—Jerry Lawler, 3—The Giant

1995: Jerry Lawler
Runners-up: 1—Kevin Sullivan, 2—The Gangstas, 3—Davey Boy Smith

1994: Bob Backlund
Runners-up: 1—Owen Hart, 2—Big Van Vader, 3—Jerry Lawler

1993: Jerry Lawler
Runners-up: 1—Big Van Vader, 2—Yokozuna, 3—Shawn Michaels

1992: Rick Rude
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Jake Roberts, 3—The Moondogs

1991: Sgt. Slaughter
Runners-up: 1—The Undertaker, 2—Lex Luger, 3—Jake Roberts

1990: Earthquake
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Rick Rude, 3—Eddie Gilbert

1989: Randy Savage
Runners-up: 1—Terry Funk, 2—Rick Rude, 3—Lex Luger

1988: Andre the Giant
Runners-up: 1—Barry Windham, 2—Eddie Gilbert, 3—Ted DiBiase

1987: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Andre the Giant, 2—Honky Tonk Man, 3—Lex Luger

1986: Paul Orndorff
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Col. DeBeers, 3—Rick Rude

1985: Roddy Piper
Runners-up: 1—Chris Adams, 2—Ted DiBiase, 3—John Studd

1984: Roddy Piper
Runners-up: 1—Kevin Sullivan, 2—Tully Blanchard, 3—The Iron Sheik

1983: Greg Valentine
Runners-up: 1—Masked Superstar, 2—Kevin Sullivan, 3—Michael Hayes

1982: Ted DiBiase
Runners-up: 1—Blackjack Mulligan, 2—Superstar Graham, 3—Buzz Sawyer

1981: Ken Patera
Runners-up: 1—Don Muraco, 2—Nick Bockwinkel, 3—Roddy Piper

1980: Larry Zbyszko
Runners-up: 1—Greg Valentine, 2—Ernie Ladd, 3—Hulk Hogan

1979: Greg Valentine
Runners-up: 1—Terry Funk, 2—Ken Patera, 3—Ivan Koloff

1978: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Ken Patera, 2—Victor Rivera, 3—Bob Orton Jr.

1977: Ken Patera
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Superstar Graham, 3—Nick Bockwinkel

1976: Stan Hansen
Runners-up: 1—Ox Baker, 2—Terry Funk, 3—The Spoiler

1975: Greg Valentine

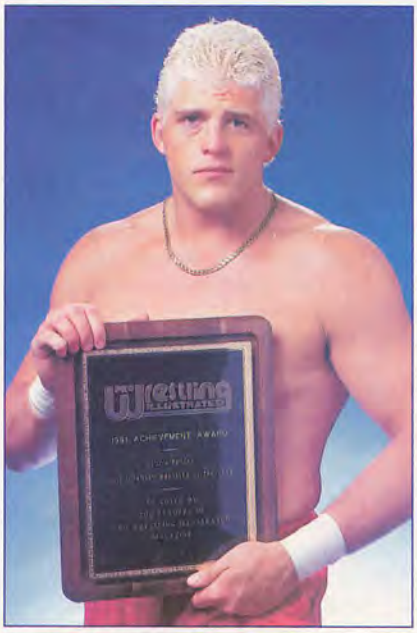
1974: The Great Mephisto

PWI ACHIEVEMENT ☆☆☆☆☆☆

1973: Superstar Graham
1972: The Sheik

MOST IMPROVED WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

2009: John Morrison
Runners-Up: 1—Dolph Ziggler, 2—Eric Young, 3—The Miz
2008: Cody Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—The Miz, 2—Petey Williams, 3—Kofi Kingston
2007: Candice Michelle
Runners-up: 1—Jay Lethal, 2—MVP, 3—Cody Rhodes
2006: Bobby Lashley
Runners-up: 1—Johnny Nitro, 2—Chris Sabin, 3—Umaga
2005: Batista
Runners-up: 1—Carlito, 2—Monty Brown, 3—Chris Masters
2004: Randy Orton
Runners-up: 1—Shelton Benjamin, 2—Batista, 3—William Regal
2003: John Cena
Runners-up: 1—Matt Hardy, 2—Shelton Benjamin & Charlie Haas, 3—Victoria
2002: Brock Lesnar
Runners-up: 1—Trish Stratus, 2—Jamie Noble, 3—AJ Styles
2001: Edge
Runners-up: 1—Test, 2—The Hurricane, 3—Kurt Angle
2000: Steve Corino
Runners-up: 1—Lance Storm, 2—Scotty Too Hotty, 3—Justin Credible
1999: Jerry Lynn
Runners-up: 1—The Hardy Boyz, 2—Bob Holly, 3—Kanyon
1998: Booker T
Runners-up: 1—D-Lo Brown, 2—The New Age Outlaws, 3—Juventud Guerrera
1997: Ken Shamrock
Runners-up: 1—Steve McMichael, 2—The Headbangers, 3—Alex Wright
1996: Ahmed Johnson
Runners-up: 1—Chris Benoit, 2—Stevie Richards, 3—Taz
1995: Dallas Page
Runners-up: 1—Tommy Dreamer, 2—Harlem Heat, 3—Savio Vega
1994: Diesel
Runners-up: 1—Johnny B. Badd, 2—Sabu, 3—Owen Hart
1993: Yokozuna
Runners-up: 1—The Kid, 2—Brian Lee, 3—Tatanka
1992: Razor Ramon
Runners-up: 1—Ron Simmons, 2—Virgil, 3—Brian Christopher
1991: Dustin Rhodes
Runners-up: 1—Ron Simmons, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Crush
1990: Paul Roma
Runners-up: 1—Doom, 2—Tug boat, 3—Cactus Jack
1989: Scott Steiner
Runners-up: 1—Brutus Beefcake, 2—Jeff Jarrett, 3—P.Y. Chu-Hi
1988: Sting
Runners-up: 1—The Ultimate Warrior, 2—Iceman Parsons, 3—Jeff Jarrett
1987: Curt Hennig
Runners-up: 1—Al Perez, 2—Honky Tonk Man, 3—Sting
1986: Terry Gordy
Runners-up: 1—Scott Hall, 2—Sam Houston, 3—Wendell Cooley
1985: Steve Williams
Runners-up: 1—Brian Adias, 2—Nikita Koloff, 3—Randy Savage
1984: Billy Jack Haynes
Runners-up: 1—Magnum T.A., 2—Rick Martel, 3—Ronnie Garvin



Dustin Rhodes: 1991

1983: Brett Wayne Sawyer
Runners-up: 1—Mike Rotundo, 2—Pez Whatley, 3—Brad Rheingans
1982: Barry Windham
Runners-up: 1—Otto Wanz, 2—Buzz Sawyer, 3—Rick Martel
1981: Kevin Sullivan
Runners-up: 1—Sgt. Slaughter, 2—Charlie Cook, 3—Tito Santana
1980: Tony Atlas
Runners-up: 1—Larry Zbyszko, 2—Ted DiBiase, 3—Kerry Von Erich
1979: Tommy Rich
Runners-up: 1—Eddy Mansfield, 2—Kevin Von Erich, 3—Ted DiBiase
1978: Dino Bravo
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund, 2—Rick Steamboat, 3—Tony Atlas

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

2009: Jerry Lynn
Runners-Up: 1—Rick Steamboat, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Mick Foley
2008: Chris Jericho
Runners-up: 1—Jeff Jarrett, 2—William Regal, 3—Abdul Bashir
2007: Jeff Hardy
Runners-up: 1—Triple-H, 2—Rey Mysterio Jr., 3—Steiner Brothers
2006: Sting
Runners-up: 1—Sabu, 2—Jeff Hardy, 3—Finlay
2005: Animal
Runners-up: 1—Matt Hardy, 2—Raven, 3—Hulk Hogan
2004: Edge
Runners-up: 1—Jeff Hardy, 2—William Regal, 3—Chavo Guerrero Sr.
2003: Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Bill Goldberg, 2—Raven, 3—Ultimo Dragon
2002: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Eddie Guerrero, 2—Chris Benoit, 3—Ron Killings
2001: Rob Van Dam
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—Booker T, 3—Scott Hall
2000: Rikishi
Runners-up: 1—Dusty Rhodes, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Bryan Clark
1999: Eddie Guerrero
Runners-up: 1—Buff Bagwell, 2—Curt Hennig, 3—Michael Hayes
1998: X-Pac
Runners-up: 1—Sting, 2—Dean Malenko, 3—The Warrior

PWI SUPERSTATS

Ultimate Warrior: 1992

1997: Bret Hart
Runners-up: 1—Curt Hennig, 2—Brian Pillman, 3—Ric Flair

1996: Sid Vicious
Runners-up: 1—Jake Roberts, 2—Faarooq, 3—Road Warrior Animal

1995: Randy Savage
Runners-up: 1—The Heavenly Bodies, 2—Savio Vega, 3—The Ultimate Warrior

1994: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund, 2—The Undertaker, 3—Alundra Blayze

1993: Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Brutus Beefcake, 2—Ric Flair, 3—Paul Roma

1992: The Ultimate Warrior
Runners-up: 1—Bob Backlund, 2—The Sheik, 3—Junkyard Dog

INSPIRATIONAL WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

2009: Rick Steamboat
Runners-Up: 1—Tommy Dreamer, 2—Sting, 3—John Cena

2008: Ric Flair
Runners-up: 1—Jeff Hardy, 2—John Cena, 3—CM Punk

2007: Jeff Jarrett
Runners-up: 1—CM Punk, 2—John Cena, 3—Sting

2006: Matt Cappotelli
Runners-up: 1—Rey Mysterio Jr., 2—Bob Holly, 3—CM Punk

2005: Chris Candido
Runners-up: 1—Matt Hardy, 2—Steve Williams, 3—Rey Mysterio Jr.

2004: Eddie Guerrero
Runners-up: 1—Chris Benoit, 2—Eugene, 3—William Regal

2003: Zach Gowen
Runners-up: 1—Kurt Angle, 2—AJ Styles, 3—Rey Mysterio Jr.

2002: Eddie Guerrero
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Charlie Haas, 3—Chris Benoit

2001: Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Chris Jericho, 2—Shane McMahon, 3—Spike Dudley

2000: Booker T
Runners-up: 1—Mick Foley, 2—Crash Holly, 3—Chyna

1999: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Bret Hart, 2—X-Pac, 3—Hacksaw Duggan

1998: Bill Goldberg
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—Mankind, 3—Shane Douglas

1997: Terry Funk
Runners-up: 1—Steve Austin, 2—Perry Saturn, 3—Roddy Piper

1996: Jake Roberts
Runners-up: 1—Jushin Liger, 2—Ahmed Johnson, 3—Rey Mysterio Jr.

1995: Barry Horowitz
Runners-up: 1—Sabu, 2—Antonio Inoki, 3—Dan Severn

1994: Bret Hart
Runners-up: 1—Terry Funk, 2—The Guardian Angel, 3—Dave Sullivan

1993: Cactus Jack
Runners-up: 1—Lex Luger, 2—The Kid, 3—Brutus Beefcake

1992: Ron Simmons
Runners-up: 1—The Undertaker, 2—Rick Steamboat, 3—Eric Embry

1991: The Patriot
Runners-up: 1—Jerry Lawler, 2—Sid Justice, 3—Bill Dundee

1990: Sting
Runners-up: 1—Hulk Hogan, 2—Jerry Lawler, 3—Nikolai Volkoff

1989: Eric Embry
Runners-up: 1—Nikita Koloff, 2—Billy Jack Haynes, 3—Ric Flair

1988: Jerry Lawler
Runners-up: 1—Kerry Von Erich, 2—Road Warrior Animal, 3—Jake Roberts

1987: Nikita Koloff
Runners-up: 1—Dynamite Kid, 2—Chris Adams, 3—Superstar Graham

1986: Chris Adams
Runners-up: 1—Magnum T.A., 2—Kerry Von Erich, 3—Steve Williams

1985: Mike Von Erich
Runners-up: 1—Paul Orndorff, 2—Hacksaw Duggan, 3—Kevin Von Erich

1984: Sgt. Slaughter
Runners-up: 1—Kerry Von Erich, 2—Kevin Von Erich, 3—Bob Backlund

1983: Hulk Hogan
Runners-up: 1—Roddy Piper, 2—Buzz Sawyer, 3—Buddy Rose

1982: Roddy Piper
Runners-up: 1—Jimmy Snuka, 2—Mil Mascaras, 3—Jimmy Valiant

1981: Bob Backlund

Ron Simmons: 1992

PWI ACHIEVEMENT

Runners-up: 1—Ted DiBiase, 2—Tito Santana, 3—Mr. Wrestling II

1980: Junkyard Dog
Runners-up: 1—Rick Steamboat, 2—Verne Gagne, 3—Mr. Florida

1979: Chief Jay Strongbow
Runners-up: 1—Ric Flair, 2—Mr. Wrestling II, 3—Dusty Rhodes

1978: Blackjack Mulligan
Runners-up: 1—Bruno Sammartino, 2—Mr. Wrestling II, 3—Jim Brunzell

1977: Bob Backlund
Runners-up: 1—Don Muraco, 2—Bruno Sammartino, 3—Terry Funk

1976: Bruno Sammartino
Runners-up: 1—Wahoo McDaniel, 2—Bob Roop, 3—Bob Armstrong

1975: Mike McCord

1974: Dick Murdoch

1973: Johnny Valentine

1972: Lord Al Hayes

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

2009: Mike Sydal
Runners-Up: 1—Jesse Neal, 2—Brittney Savage, 3—J.T. Flash

2008: Joe Hennig
Runners-up: 1—Brett DiBiase, 2—Ricky Steamboat Jr., 3—Ryan McBride

2007: Hornswoggle
Runners-up: 1—Ted DiBiase Jr., 2—Pelle Primeau, 3—Mike DiBiase

2006: The Boogeyman
Runners-up: 1—Charles Evans, 2—Akebono, 3—Cody Runnels

2005: Bobby Lashley
Runners-up: 1—Christy Hemme, 2—Mikey Batts, 3—Ken Doane

2004: Monty Brown
Runners-up: 1—Petey Williams, 2—Johnny Nitro, 3—Matt Cappotelli

2003: Zach Gowen
Runners-up: 1—Sylvan Grenier, 2—Trinity, 3—Matt Morgan

2002: Maven
Runners-up: 1—Christopher Nowinski, 2—Nidia, 3—Taylor Matheny

2001: Randy Orton
Runners-up: 1—Brock Lesnar, 2—K-Kwik, 3—Prototype

2000: Kurt Angle
Runners-up: 1—Lita, 2—Mark Jindrak & Sean O'Haire, 3—Chuck Palumbo

1999: Shane McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Evan Karagias, 2—Vince McMahon, 3—Lash LeRoux

1998: Bill Goldberg
Runners-up: 1—Sable, 2—Darren Drozdov, 3—Mark Henry

1997: Prince Iaukea
Runners-up: 1—Ernest Miller, 2—Chris Chetti, 3—Brakkus

1996: The Giant
Runners-up: 1—Steve McMichael, 2—Rocky Maivia, 3—Joe Gomez

1995: Alex Wright
Runners-up: 1—Sgt. Craig Pittman, 2—Lawrence Taylor, 3—Madd Maxxine

1994: 911
Runners-up: 1—Bob Holly, 2—Abbudah Singh, 3—Mikey Whipwreck

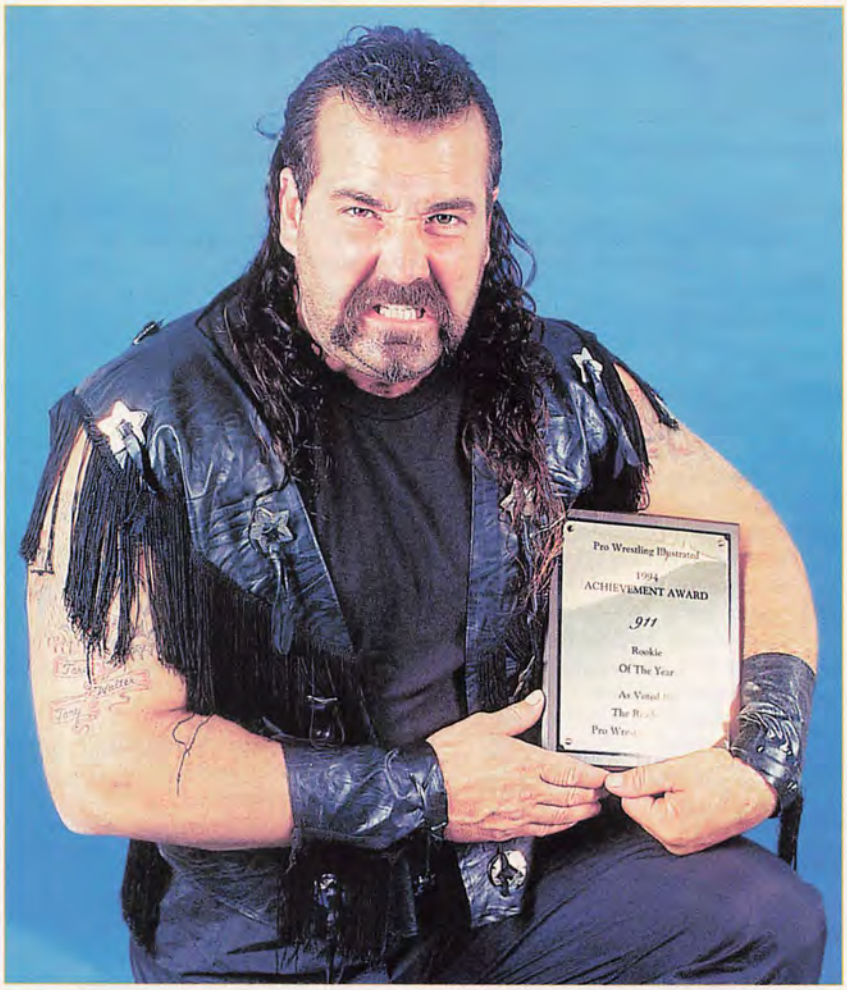
1993: Vampire Warrior
Runners-up: 1—Robbie Eagle, 2—Keith & Kent Cole, 3—The Headhunters

1992: Erik Watts
Runners-up: 1—Dallas Page, 2—Vladimir Koloff, 3—Chaz

1991: Johnny B. Badd
Runners-up: 1—The Patriot, 2—Terri Power, 3—Lightning Kid

1990: Steve Austin
Runners-up: 1—El Gigante, 2—Brad Anderson, 3—Chris Chavis

1989: Mike Enos & Wayne Bloom
Runners-up: 1—Dustin Rhodes,



911: 1994

PWI SUPERSTATS

Trish Stratus: 2002

2—Scotty the Body, 3—Johnathan Holliday

1988: Madusa Miceli
Runners-up: 1—Chris Benoit, 2—Max Pain, 3—Scott Steiner

1987: Owen Hart
Runners-up: 1—Bubba Rogers, 2—Shane Douglas, 3—Doug Furnas

1986: Lex Luger
Runners-up: 1—Bam Bam Bigelow, 2—Sting, 3—Tom Magee

1985: Nord the Barbarian
Runners-up: 1—Kendall Windham, 2—Dan Spivey, 3—Sam Houston

1984: Mike Von Erich
Runners-up: 1—Nikita Koloff, 2—Krusher Khrushchev, 3—Kevin Kelly

1983: Angelo Mosca Jr.
Runners-up: 1—King Kong Bundy, 2—Scott Armstrong, 3—Arn Anderson

1982: Brad Armstrong
Runners-up: 1—Tiger Mask, 2—Mike Rotundo, 3—Kamala

1981: David Sammartino
Runners-up: 1—Brad Rheingans, 2—Curt Hennig, 3—Ron Richie

1980: Terry Taylor
Runners-up: 1—Barry Windham, 2—Rick McGraw, 3—Tom Prichard

1979: Sweet Brown Sugar
Runners-up: 1—Steve Travis, 2—Bryan St. John, 3—Eddie Gilbert

1978: Tommy Rich
Runners-up: 1—Jay Youngblood, 2—David Von Erich, 3—Tully Blanchard

1977: Rick Steamboat
Runners-up: 1—Jimmy Snuka, 2—John Studd, 3—Skip Young

1976: Bob Backlund
Runners-up: 1—Chavo Guerrero Sr., 2—Steve Keirn, 3—Johnny Rivera

1975: Ric Flair
1974: Larry Zbyszko
1973: Bob Orton Jr./Tony Garea (tie)
1972: Mike Graham

WOMAN OF THE YEAR

2009: Mickie James
Runners-Up: 1—Melina, 2—Tara, 3—Michelle McCool

2008: Awesome Kong
Runners-up: 1—Beth Phoenix, 2—Mickie James, 3—Michelle McCool

2007: Candice Michelle
Runners-up: 1—Beth Phoenix, 2—Gail Kim, 3—Karen Angle

2006: Trish Stratus
Runners-up: 1—Dixie Carter, 2—Mickie James, 3—Lita

2005: Trish Stratus
Runners-up: 1—Christy Hemme, 2—Melina, 3—Lita

2004: Victoria
Runners-up: 1—Trish Stratus, 2—Stacy Keibler, 3—Molly Holly

2003: Trish Stratus
Runners-up: 1—Stephanie McMahon, 2—Victoria, 3—Torrie Wilson

2002: Trish Stratus
Runners-up: 1—Stephanie McMahon, 2—Stacy Keibler, 3—Torrie Wilson

2001: Lita
Runners-up: 1—Stephanie McMahon, 2—Stacy Keibler, 3—Torrie Wilson

2000: Stephanie McMahon
Runners-up: 1—Lita, 2—Chyna, 3—Major Gunns

STANLEY WESTON/ EDITORS' AWARD

2009: Vince McMahon
2008: Ric Flair
2007: Nick Bockwinkel
2006: Harley Race
2005: Eddie Guerrero
2004: Pat Patterson
2003: Bret Hart
2002: Jim Ross
2001: Johnny Valentine
2000: Freddie Blassie
1999: Owen Hart
1998: Bobo Brazil
1997: Arn Anderson
1996: Dan Hodge
1995: Rick Steamboat
1994: Capt. Lou Albano
1993: Andre the Giant
1992: Stanley Weston
1991: Fabulous Moolah
1990: Buddy Rogers
1989: Gordon Solie
1988: Bruiser Brody & Adrian Adonis
1987: Paul Boesch
1986: Verne Gagne
1985: Dan Shocket
1984: David Von Erich
1983: The Grand Wizard
1982: Lou Thesz
1981: Bruno Sammartino

Freddie Blassie: 2000

PWI ACHIEVEMENT: TITLE CHANGES 2010

The following is a cumulative listing of all major title changes to have taken place in 2010 up to press time. For a comprehensive up-to-date title listing, be sure to check out the "Roll Call Of Champions" in each combined issue of *The Wrestler/Inside Wrestling*.

Photo by Koichi Yoshizawa

Suwama

AAA HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Electroshock	El Mesias	Queretaro, Mexico	March 12
Dr. Wagner Jr.	Electroshock	Mexico City, Mexico	June 6
El Zorro	Dr. Wagner Jr.	Zopopan, Mexico	December 5

AAA TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Taiji Ishimori & Takeshi Morishima	Joe Lider & Nicho el Milionario	Mexico City, Mexico	March 19
Atsushi Aoki & Go Shiozaki	Taiji Ishimori & Takeshi Morishima	Niigata, Japan	May 23
Silver Cain & Ultimo Gladiator	Atsushi Aoki & Go Shiozaki	Mexico City, Mexico	June 6

ALL JAPAN TRIPLE CROWN TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Ryota Hama	Satoshi Kojima	Tokyo, Japan	March 21
Minoru Suzuki	Ryota Hama	Aichi, Japan	May 2
Suwama	Minoru Suzuki	Tokyo, Japan	August 29

ALL JAPAN UNIFIED TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Masakatsu Funaki & Keiji Muto[1]	Taiyo Kea & Akebono	Tokyo, Japan	January 3
Taiyo Kea & Akebono[2]	Suwama & Ryoto Hama	Osaka, Japan	July 4

[1]Title vacated on June 16 due to knee injury Muto
[2]Title vacancy filled in a match of two top contenders

ALL JAPAN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

Kaz Hayashi: Title held since February 6, 2009

CMLL HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

Ultimo Guerrero: Title held since December 22, 2008

CMLL TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Mr. Aguila & Hector Garza	La Sombra & Volador Jr.	Mexico City, Mexico	July 16
Dragon Rojo Jr. & Ultimo Guerrero	Mr. Aguila & Hector Garza	Mexico City, Mexico	November 2

FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Alex Riley	Justin Gabriel	Tampa, FL	March 18[1]
Mason Ryan	Alex Riley	Tampa, FL	July 22[2]

[1]Match also included Wade Barrett
[2]Match also included Johnny Curtis

Photo by George Tahinos

Ultimo Guerrero

FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Joe Hennig & Brett DiBiase	Caylen Croft & Trent Baretta	Tampa, FL	January 10
Jimmy & Jules Uso[1]	Joe Hennig & Brett DiBiase	Crystal River, FL	March 13
Epico & Hunico	Jimmy & Jey Uso	Tampa, FL	June 3
Michael McGillicutty & Kaval	Epico & Hunico	Tampa, FL	July 15
Epico & Hunico	Michael McGillicutty & Kaval	Sebring, FL	July 16
Derrick Bateman & Johnny Curtis	Michael McGillicutty & Kaval	Tampa, FL	August 12
Xavier Woods & Wes Brisco	Derrick Bateman & Johnny Curtis	Tampa, FL	November 4
Damien Sandow & Titus O'Neill[2]	—	Plant City, FL	December 3

[1]Jules Uso changed name to Jey Uso during reign
[2]Defeated Xavier Woods & Mason Ryan to win the vacant title

FLORIDA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING DIVAS TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Naomi Night[1]	—	Tampa, FL	June 10
AJ Lee	Naomi Night	Tampa, FL	December 16

[1]Defeated Serena in final of eight-woman tournament for newly created title

IWGP HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Togi Makabi	Shinsuke Nakamura	Fukuoka, Japan	May 3
Satoshi Kojima	Togi Makabi	Tokyo, Japan	October 11

IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Namomichi Marufuji	Tiger Mask IV	Tokyo, Japan	January 4
Prince Devitt	Namomichi Marufuji	Osaka, Japan	June 19

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Testuya Naito & Yujiro Takahashi	Brother Ray & Brother Devon	Tokyo, Japan	January 4[1]
Wataru Inoue & Yuji Nagata	Testuya Naito & Yujiro Takahashi	Fukuoka, Japan	May 3[2]
Giant Bernard & Karl Anderson	Wataru Inoue & Yuji Nagata	Osaka, Japan	June 19[3]

[1]Match also included Karl Anderson & Giant Bernard
[2]Match also included Karl Anderson & Giant Bernard
[3]Match also included Testuya Naito & Yujiro Takahashi

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AJ Lee

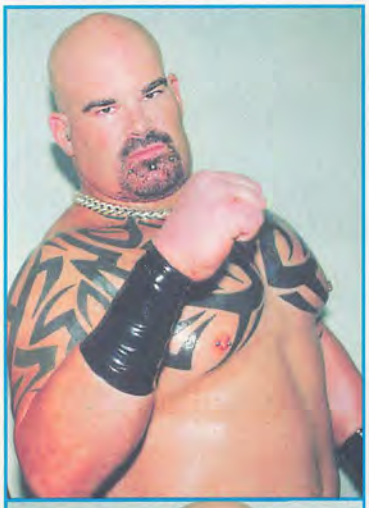

Photo by Koichi Yoshizawa

Giant Bernard & Karl Anderson

Photo by Scott Finkelstein

Roderick Strong

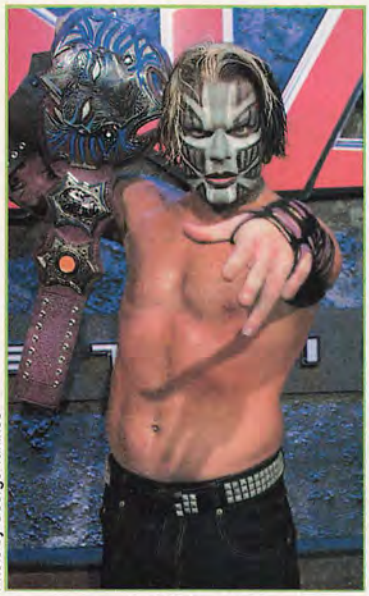

Photo by George Tahinos

Jeff Hardy

NWA HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Adam Pearce	Blue Demon Jr.	Charlotte, NC	March 14

NWA TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Jon Davis & Kory Chavis	Rasche Brown & Keith Walker	Milwaukee, WI	November 20

PRO WRESTLING NOAH GLOBAL HONORED CROWN TITLE

Takashi Sugiura: Title held since December 6, 2009

PRO WRESTLING NOAH GLOBAL HONORED CROWN TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Bison Smith & Keith Walker[1]	Takeshi Rikio & Mohammed Yone	Osaka, Japan	April 14
Yoshihiro Takayama & Takuma Sano[2]	—	Osaka, Japan	September 18

[1]Vacated title September 10 due to an illness to Walker's father
[2]Defeated Akitoshi & Bison Smith to fill vacant title

PRO WRESTLING NOAH GLOBAL HONORED CROWN JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

Yoshinobu Kanemaru: Title held since October 31, 2009

RING OF HONOR TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Tyler Black	Austin Aries	New York. NY	February 13
Roderick Strong	Tyler Black	New York, NY	September 11

RING OF HONOR TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Chris Hero & Claudio Castagnoli	Jay & Mark Briscoe	Charlotte, NC	April 3

RING OF HONOR TV TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Eddie Edwards[1]	—	Philadelphia, PA	March 5
Christopher Daniels	Eddie Edwards	Louisville, KY	December 10

[1]Defeated Davey Richards in the final of an eight-man tournament for the newly created title

TNA WORLD TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Rob Van Dam[1]	AJ Styles	Orlando, FL	April 19
Jeff Hardy[2]	—	Daytona Beach, FL	October 10

[1]Relinquished title August 10 due to injuries
[2]Defeated Kurt Angle and Mr. Anderson in tournament final three-way to fill vacancy

TNA WORLD TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Hernandez[1] & Matt Morgan	Brutus Magnus & Doug Williams	Orlando, FL	January 17
Eric Young, Kevin Nash (& Scott Hall)[1]&[2]	Matt Morgan	Orlando, FL	May 4
Alex Shelley & Chris Sabin[3]	—	Orlando, FL	July 11

[1]Any two of the three would be permitted to defend the title
[2]Stripped of the title June 14 after Hall's arrest
[3]Won a best-of-five series against James Storm & Robert Roode to claim the vacant title

TNA KNOCKOUTS TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
ODB	Tara	Orlando, FL	January 4
Tara	ODB	Orlando, FL	January 17
Angelina Love[1]	Tara	Orlando, FL	April 5
Madison Rayne[2]	Angelina Love	St. Charles, MO	April 18
Angelina Love	Madison Rayne	Orlando, FL	July 11
Madison Rayne[3]	—	Orlando, FL	July 13
Angelina Love	Madison Rayne	Orlando, FL	August 9
Tara	Angelina Love	Daytona Beach, FL	October 10[4]
Madison Rayne	Tara	Orlando, FL	October 11

[1]Selected the box containing the Knockouts championship after winning a Lockbox eight-woman elimination tag match
[2]Won the title by pinning Love's partner, Tara, per stipulation in this tag team steel cage match
[3]Awarded title after threatening a lawsuit over DQ title loss on July 11
[4]The match also included Madison Rayne and Velvet Sky

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Madison Rayne

TNA KNOCKOUTS TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Awesome Kong & Hamada[1]	Sarita & Taylor Wilde	Orlando, FL	January 4
Madison Rayne, Velvet Sky (& Lacey Von Erich)[2]	—	Orlando, FL	March 8
Hamada & Taylor Wilde	Lacey Von Erich & Velvet Sky	Orlando, FL	July 27
Angelina Love & Winter[3]	—	Orlando, FL	December 5

[1]Stripped of the title on March 8 for failure to defend within 30 days
[2]Any two of the three would be permitted to defend the title
[3]Defeated Madison Rayne & Tara in the finals for the vacant title

TNA TV TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Rob Terry	Eric Young	Cardiff, Wales	January 27
AJ Styles[1]	Rob Terry	Orlando, FL	July 13
Douglas Williams	AJ Styles	Orlando, FL	December 5

[1]Renamed the Global title as the TV title on July 22

Photo by George Tahinos

Douglas Williams

PWI ACHIEVEMENT: TITLE CHANGES 2010

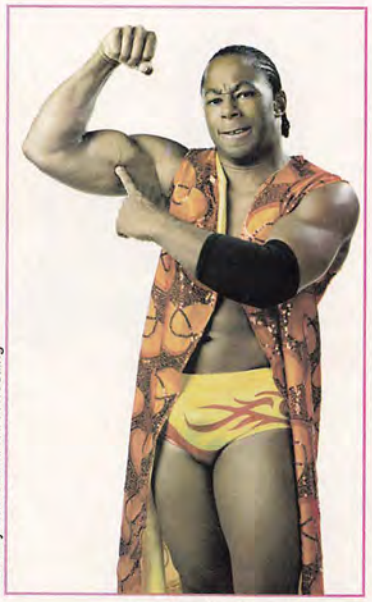

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Jay Lethal

TNA X DIVISION TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Doug Williams[1]	Amazing Red	Orlando, FL	January 19
Kazarian[2]	—	St. Charles, MO	April 18
Douglas Williams	Kazarian	Orlando, FL	May 16
Jay Lethal	Douglas Williams	Orlando, FL	September 6
Amazing Red	Jay Lethal	New York, NY	September 23
Jay Lethal	Amazing Red	Rahway, NJ	September 25
Robbie E	Jay Lethal	Orlando, FL	November 7
Jay Lethal	Robbie E	Orlando, FL	December 7

[1]Stripped of the title for not being able to defend due to travel restrictions
[2]Defeated Shannon Moore in a cage match to fill title vacancy

WWE HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
John Cena	Sheamus	St. Louis, MO	February 21[1]
Batista	John Cena	St. Louis, MO	February 21
John Cena	Batista	Glendale, AZ	March 28
Sheamus	John Cena	Uniondale, NY	June 20[2]
Randy Orton	Sheamus	Chicago, IL	September 19[3]
The Miz	Randy Orton	Orlando, FL	November 22

[1]Elimination Chamber match also included Triple-H, Randy Orton, Ted DiBiase Jr., and Kofi Kingston
[2]Fatal 4-Way also included Randy Orton and Edge
[3]Six-Pack Challenge also included Edge, John Cena, Chris Jericho, and Wade Barrett

WWE WORLD TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Chris Jericho	The Undertaker	St. Louis, MO	February 21[1]
Jack Swagger	Chris Jericho	Las Vegas, NV	March 30
Rey Mysterio Jr.	Jack Swagger	Uniondale, NY	June 20[2]
Kane	Rey Mysterio Jr.	Kansas City, MO	July 18
Edge	Kane	Houston, TX	December 19[3]

[1]Elimination Chamber match also included John Morrison, R-Truth, CM Punk, and Rey Mysterio Jr.
[2]Fatal 4-Way match also included The Big Show and CM Punk
[3]Ladder match also included Rey Mysterio Jr. and Jack Swagger

WWE INTERCONTINENTAL TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Kofi Kingston	Drew McIntyre	Detroit, MI	May 23
Dolph Ziggler	Kofi Kingston	Laredo, TX	July 28

WWE U.S. TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Bret Hart[1]	The Miz	Toronto, ON	May 17
R-Truth	—	Toledo, OH	May 24
The Miz	R-Truth	Toledo, OH	June 14[2]
Daniel Bryan	The Miz	Rosemont, IL	September 19

[1]Relinquished the title May 24 to become Raw general manager
[2]Defeated The Miz to fill title vacancy

Photo by Matt Roberts

Edge

WWE TAG TEAM TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
The Big Show & The Miz	Triple-H & Shawn Michaels	Lafayette, LA	February 8[1]
D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd	The Big Show & The Miz	Richmond, VA	April 26
Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre	D.H. Smith & Tyson Kidd	Rosemont, IL	September 19[2]
David Otunga & John Cena	Cody Rhodes & Drew McIntyre	Minneapolis, MN	October 24
Heath Slater & Justin Gabriel	David Otunga & John Cena	Green Bay, WI	October 25
Santino Marella & Vladimir Kozlov	Heath Slater & Justin Gabriel	Louisville, KY	December 6[3]

[1]Triple-threat match also included CM Punk and Luke Gallows
[2]Tag Team Turmoil match also included Jimmy & Jey Uso, Santino Marella & Vladimir Kozlov, and Evan Bourne & Mark Henry
[3]Fatal 4-Way match also include Mark Henry & Yoshi Tatsu and Jimmy & Jey Uso

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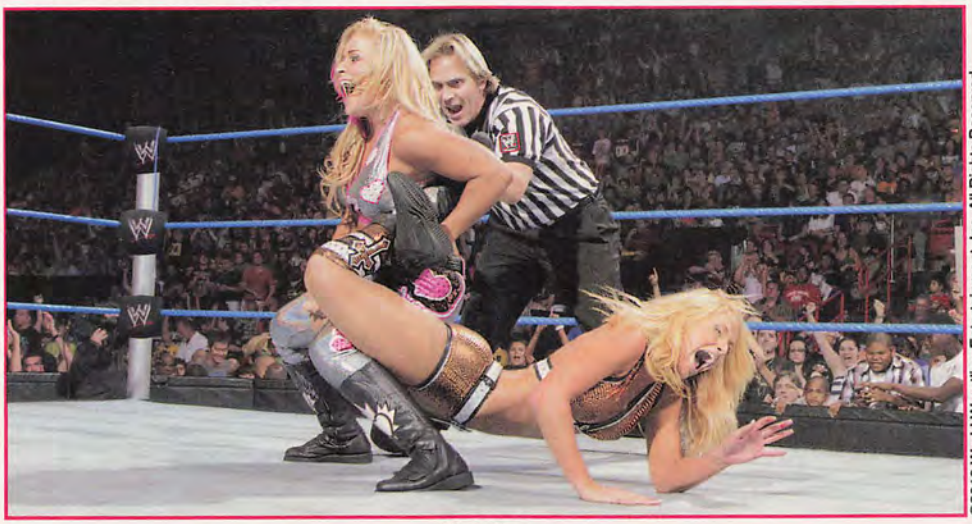
Santino & Kozlov

WWE DIVAS TITLE

CHAMPION	WON FROM	LOCATION	DATE
Maryse[1]	—	Indianapolis, IN	February 22
Eve Torres	Maryse	London, England	April 12
Alicia Fox	Maryse	Uniondale, NY	June 20[2]
Melina	Alicia Fox	Los Angeles, CA	August 15
Michelle McCool	Melina	Rosemont, IL	September 19[3]
Natalya[4]	Michelle McCool	Miami, FL	November 21

[1]Defeated Gail Kim in tournament final to fill title vacancy
[2]Match also included Gail Kim and Maryse
[3]Unified Divas and World Women's titles
[4]This was a handicap match also involving Layla El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Natalya

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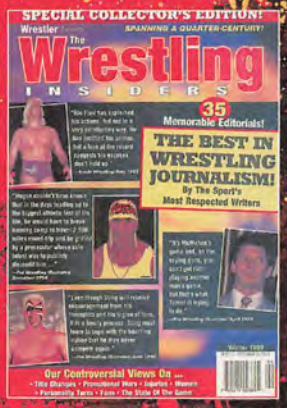
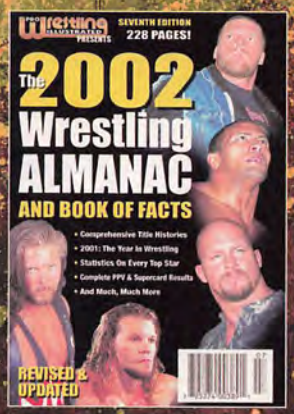
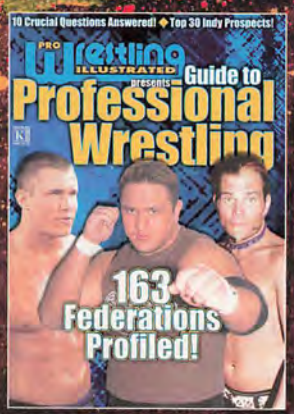


WRESTLING INSIDERS (Winter '99)
Go back through the years with wrestling's most respected columnists, including Dan Shocket, Eddie Ellner, and Stu Saks.

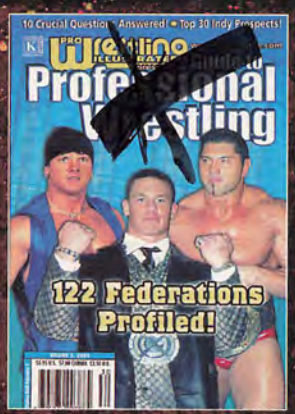
WRESTLING INSIDERS (Fall 2000)
Titles, holds and maneuvers, supercards, tag teams, hall of famers, the state of the game. You want our opinion? Buy the magazine!



2002 WRESTLING ALMANAC
The seventh annual edition updates our historical records and takes a look back at the year 2001.

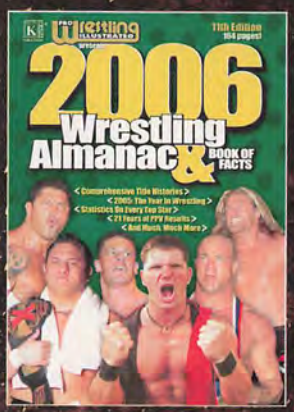


PWI GUIDE TO PRO WRESTLING (2004)
More than 160 pro wrestling federations profiled, 10 crucial questions for 2005, top 30 prospects. Digest format.



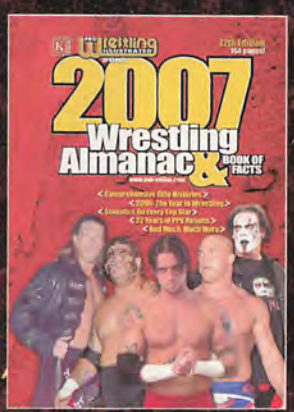
PWI GUIDE TO PRO WRESTLING (2005)
More than 122 pro wrestling federations profiled, 10 crucial questions for 2006, top 30 prospects, all-time "Indy 30." Digest format.

PWI WRESTLING YEARBOOK (FALL 2005)
Insider scouting reports on 50 stars, color pinups galore. 164 pages.



2006 WRESTLING ALMANAC
Pay-per-view and title lineage updates, a look back at the top stories of 2005, plus much more.

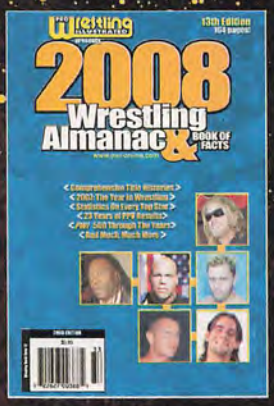
REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS (October 2006)
Grading the top 50 stars in the sport today. 164 pages.



2007 WRESTLING ALMANAC
2006 in review, plus pay-per-view rundown, title histories, and much more.

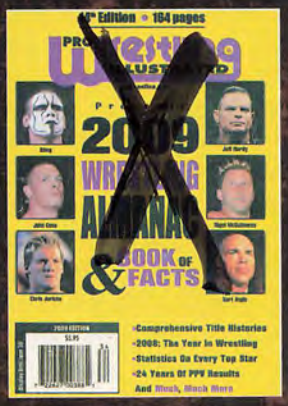
REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS
(October 2007)
Back with our grades for the sport's top 50 stars. 164 pages.

REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS
(July 2008)
It's nervous time for 50 top wrestlers! 164 pages.



2008 WRESTLING ALMANAC
A review of the biggest stories of 2007, plus title chronology and PPV result updates, and more.

PWI 500 (October 2008)
The list changes every year, but the reaction from the wrestling community does not. A ranking of the 500 wrestlers is a lightning rod for controversy. 164 pages.



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2008 in review, comprehensive title histories, PPV history, and more.

REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS
(July 2009)
We might ask the wrestlers to get them signed by their parents! 164 pages.

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It had been nine years since Triple-H last topped the list, and many criticized our choice. But based on his in-ring success, nobody was more deserving of the honor. 164 pages.

2010 WRESTLING ALMANAC
2009 in review, plus pay-per-view listing, guide to indies, title histories, and much more.

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- ☐ Wrestling Insiders (Fall 2000)
- ☐ 2002 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ PWI Guide To Pro Wrestling (2004)
- ☐ PWI Guide To Pro Wrestling (Vol. 2, 2005)
- ☐ PWI Wrestling Yearbook (Fall 2005)
- ☐ 2006 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ Report Cards Of The Stars (October 2006)
- ☐ 2007 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ Report Cards Of The Stars (October 2007)
- ☐ Report Cards Of The Stars (July 2008)
- ☐ 2008 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ 2008 PWI 500 (October2008)
- ☐ 2009 Wrestling Almanac
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Photo by Stu Saks

STU SAKS [Publisher]: "Something is very wrong when a humble young man like AJ Styles portrays the part of a self-centered jerk, while Randy Orton, who is ever so full of himself, is voted 2010's Most Popular Wrestler. From a personal perspective, I find it interesting to contrast the reactions of the two men upon being named number-one in the '*PWI* 500.' Said Orton to *Slam! Wrestling* in 2008: 'If I'm first or 60th, it doesn't really matter to me. But when my wife sees the magazine at Walgreen's she's like, "That's so cool!" It really means nothing to me.' Said Styles in 2010: 'This is an honor for someone who tracked his progress in the business by checking his ranking each year. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.' Maybe I'm taking this too personally, but I don't think so. Somehow, these men have to get back to being portrayed in their true characters in 2011."

Photo by George Napolitano

FRANK KREWDA [Editor-in-Chief]: "While I would much rather discuss something more positive in this space, I can't help but recall WWE's poor treatment of Mickie James over the summer. Yes, there were reports of unprofessional behavior, a few bad matches, and James had indeed put on a few pounds, but WWE's attempt to humiliate Mickie by subjecting her to the mean-spirited 'Piggy' James storyline came off as petty and shallow. It also looked like sour grapes on WWE's part over James' new country music career. Somehow, WWE felt it was more important to teach James a lesson than it was to showcase her talent and beauty. But whom did WWE spite by releasing one of the most successful and popular Divas in company history? Certainly not James, who has remained as upbeat, spunky, and attractive as ever, and has also landed on her feet in TNA."

Photo by George Tahinos

JEFF RUOSS [Managing Editor]: "In April, I was given a chance to present Baron Von Raschke, Dory Funk Jr., Jimmy Hart, and Bobby Heenan lifetime achievement awards at TNA's Lockdown FanFest. After the event, Baron, Dory, and 'The Brain,' filed into a limo back to the hotel. I rode shotgun. It didn't take long for the laughter in the back to grab my attention. It was awesome to hear the way these men talk about the first time they had all met each other, share their views on today's current performers, and even perfectly recall the feel of a ring in some no-name arena. It was a truly eye-opening experience to see the 'real' side of these legends, and how they still cared so much for the business. Looking back, it has become more special to me now that Heenan, a true favorite of mine as a child, appears to be in worsening health. While I have been able to do a lot of cool things since joining the PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED staff, this is one of those memories that will last well beyond this calendar year."

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

DAVE LENKER [Senior Writer]: "I'll venture way back to the beginning of the year. It was the first Monday night of 2010, and TNA was holding a special live edition of *Impact*. It was one of far too many nights during which TNA threw way too much at us in the span of a couple of hours, which resulted in us struggling to remember anything. But I do vividly remember the groan that escaped my mouth when I saw Ric Flair emerge from a limousine that night. I proudly call myself a huge Ric Flair fan. Have been since shortly after I discovered pro wrestling several decades ago and will always be one ... I think. Flair, now approaching 62, didn't reveal his true intentions in TNA—to mold AJ Styles into the next 'Nature Boy'—until weeks later, and I'll concede that he was entertaining at times in 2010. But it struck me as soon as I saw him step out of the limo that Flair, like Hulk Hogan, truly will be forever incapable of living life outside the spotlight. That's distressing."

★★★★MEMORIES OF 2010: THE EDITORS' PICKS

HARRY BURKETT [Senior Writer]: "An intriguing aspect of Dixie Carter's new power relationship with Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff at the start of 2010 was the prospect of Bischoff-Hervey Entertainment developing additional television programs for TNA and Spike. *Reaction* is the most prominent example of this collaboration, and it was something completely experimental: a backstage program featuring wrestlers in normal conversations minus the ranting, raving, and overscripting prominent on most wrestling shows today. There are some things I could have done without, such as Taz exhibiting a bad case of street-thug mouth after *Impact* transitioned into *Reaction* at 11 p.m. Eastern time. Even Mike Tenay started swearing like a sailor! I also found the shaky, freestyle cam production to be a bit desperate, trying too hard to be cutting edge, but, all in all, I applaud TNA for bringing some realism to an industry that has been plagued by too many guest hosts, Diva searches, and leprechauns recently—even if Tenay has to wash out his mouth!"

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DAN MURPHY [Senior Writer]: "On June 7, WWE delivered the most captivating and intense segments of the past 20 years. Run-ins and group attacks have become so commonplace in wrestling that it seems as if they happen every week. The Nexus assault of John Cena was different. After beating down Cena, Wade Barrett and his fellow *NXT* alumni attacked Matt Striker and Jerry Lawler. They assaulted ringside personnel, destroyed the announce table, and disassembled part of the ring. Daniel Bryan's brutal necktie attack on Justin Roberts even cost him his job for a time. It felt real. It felt unscripted. It felt unpredictable. It was eight unknowns taking on the entire WWE, and it made for great TV. That intensity wore off quickly, but for 15 minutes, WWE had me transfixed. I couldn't wait to see how the storyline unfolded, and I hadn't had that feeling in a long, long time."

Photo by George Napolitano

AL CASTLE [Senior Writer]: "For 22 years, SummerSlam has played host to some of the most star-studded main events in the history of the sport—ranging from Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart in a cage to the very first battle between John Cena and Batista. And so it was downright surreal to witness the main event of this year's SummerSlam feature none other than Daniel Bryan. The 'American Dragon's' participation—and strong showing—in the seven-on-seven bout was a testament to what I consider the biggest wrestling story of 2010, the long overdue shakeup of WWE's main-event scene. For years, it was rare to find a WWE pay-per-view not headlined by some combination of Cena, Triple-H, and Randy Orton. But in 2010, we saw Sheamus, Jack Swagger, and The Miz all get world title runs, Bryan become one of Raw's top babyfaces, and the *NXT* Season One rookies make up one of the most dominant wrestling factions since the New World Order. WWE's youth movement may not have done much to spark business, but it laid the groundwork for potential WM main events for decades."

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BRADY HICKS [Contributing Writer]: "I'll never shake the image of Bret Hart and Shawn Michaels' embrace in January on *Raw*. Heading in, I had so many thoughts about this meeting, given their well-documented feud. *Would Bret have the capacity to forgive and forget all that happened to him during the 'Montreal Screwjob'? Could Shawn turn to his newfound Christian values if he had to be the bigger man?* And, most compellingly, *would the two actually come to blows when reunited?* I know I was not alone in wondering these things. Given the unpredictable nature of live television (and that they had not been face to face in years), a massive fight seemed inevitable. What I never expected was that each man's capacity to forgive would be just as compelling. In the oft-exaggerated world of professional wrestling, probably nothing on TV has had a more 'real' feel than the genuine hatred between Bret and Shawn. For the two men who showed up that night on *Raw*—older and wiser with time—the reality was that they have both grown significantly as men since 1997."

THE BUSINESS PAGE

BY HARRY BURKETT

Hard times at WWE? When Montel Vontavious Porter was released from WWE in early-December, there was the usual concern and speculation that occurs whenever the company trims its roster of a once-promising superstar: Is WWE's financial situation that bleak? Why would Vince McMahon allow the release of an MVP?

It turns out MVP asked for his release, but others were given pink slips just in time for the holidays. One of them was Lance Hoyt, who appeared as Vance Archer in WWE.

"Really, the main reason was because of the financial situation," he said on the *Monday Night Mayhem* radio show. "I think the economy the way it is, it's affecting WWE. It's affecting everyone that's doing wrestling, from the independents on up to the biggest level there is."

While some observers assume the recent cutbacks are a sign of financial trouble, others suggest that WWE is simply making wise business moves to stay healthy during this deep recession. Indeed, WWE and other media companies were once considered recession-proof. That is no longer the case.

Photo by Duane Long

Vance Archer was among the victims of WWE's most recent roster cuts. The company has apparently impressed investors by reigning in costs.

Take WWE's recent pay-per-view numbers. The Money in the Bank PPV didn't put that much money in the bank back in July, earning only 165,000 buys, compared to 267,000 buys garnered by Night of Champions, held during the same month in 2009. SummerSlam was also down somewhat, from 369,000 to 350,000. Night of Champions, which was moved to September this year, earned 165,000 buys, roughly the same as Breaking Point in 2009. Preliminary estimates for Hell in a Cell on October 3 look better, with that PPV likely to have earned more than 200,000 buys, but expected to fall short of last year's 283,000 buys. Bragging Rights—held later in the month—gave WWE nothing to brag about, generating a dismal 143,000. Ironically, that PPV was greatly affected by UFC 21 that weekend, featuring former WWE champ Brock Lesnar.

Despite the cutbacks and dropping PPV numbers, WWE's capital expenditures increased to $9.1-million in the third quarter of 2010, compared to $3.6-million during the same period in 2009. Much of that money has gone into the planned launch of WWE's television network. But don't grab the remote just yet: COO Donna Goldsmith recently confirmed that the network, originally scheduled to launch in mid-2011, has been pushed back to 2012 or 2013.

So what's the hold-up? Apparently, WWE executives haven't decided on what type of programming will be part of the lineup, which has delayed the development of an overall marketing theme. And, because WWE hopes to involve a number of other companies in the partnership, it hasn't made sense to try to lure investors until a clear vision is in place. It looks like Santino Marella's sitcom will have to wait.

Vladimir Kozlov gets his big break ... He is at least one WWE superstar who must be thrilled to

Vladimir Kozlov (left) might soon become hometown star following WWE's broadcast deal with a Russian TV network. Meanwhile, the wealthy residents of Abu Dhabi hobnob with TNA's D'Angelo Dinero.

hear about the company's two-year distribution deal with one of Russia's most prominent television networks, 2X2. With the deal, *Raw* will air in 24 million homes across Russia, including the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

According to 2X2 General Director Roman Sarkisov, "2X2 is proud to present the captivating culture of World Wrestling Entertainment for the Russian audience because it perfectly correlates with the interests of our viewers—a young, active audience who prefer fresh and entertaining content instead of traditional TV programs."

WWE hopes the TV deal will create enough of a following to support live-event tours of Russia in the future. Will we see Nikolai Volkoff and Ivan Koloff as guest hosts?

TNA in the UAE ... WWE has nothing on TNA, which further established its worldwide presence with a three-show tour of Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the United Arab Emirates, located in the Persian Gulf. The TNA stars seemed to have quite a following in the affluent port city, with newly turned heel and current World champion Jeff Hardy receiving a greater ovation than Jay Lethal at the third and final show. In fact, Lethal was roundly booed before Hardy gained a clean pinfall with the Twist of Fate. AJ Styles, who suffered a broken finger during the tour, attracted a very strong heel reaction.

Unfortunately, attendance for the three shows was not that great, considering there was relatively little advertising preceding the events. Ticket prices, ranging from $84 to $416, were also mighty steep, even in Abu Dhabi, which arguably outranks Dubai as the richest city in the world.

WWE STOCKWATCH

[For the period of October 16 to November 30, 2010]

45-Day High: 14.12 on November 5
45-Day Low: 13.51 on November 16
52-Week High: 18.95 on April 26, 2010
52-Week Low: 12.86 on May 6, 2010

According to WWE's third-quarter report, revenues were down in nearly every category, including pay-per-view, live events, home video, merchandising, licensing, magazine publishing, and digital media. Yet WWE stock rose to a 45-day high of 14.12 the following day.

How come?

All investors are desperate for bright spots in this bad economy, and there were a couple in the report. WWE gained nearly $3-million in television rights fees from NBC Universal, with that number rising from $28.3-million in the third quarter of last year to $31.1-million in 2010. More importantly, with seven films now in the marketplace, WWE Studios generated $7.6-million, compared to only $3-million during the same quarter last year. John Cena's *Legendary* earned $3.8-million of that total. It seems that the years of investment—and a television network in the works—is finally making WWE Studios a financial success. Apparently, WWE's decisions to emphasize straight-to-video distribution and handle its own marketing were correct.

Overall, WWE was able to tout a 60 percent increase in earnings, generating $14.3-million for the period ending September 30, compared to only $8.9-million during the same quarter in 2009.

WWE also trimmed its selling, general, and administrative expenses during the third quarter, further solidifying its reputation as a cost-conscious company.

TV BREAKDOWN

RAW [USA]

October 25: 3.1
November 1: 3.3
November 8: 3.1
November 15: 3.1
November 22: 3.3
November 29: 3.1
December 6: 3.1

Analysis: Does USA Network want to expand *Raw* to three hours? USA executives were happy to have multiple three-hour *Raw* specials in its contract with WWE, and there were two such specials in November alone. A three-hour "Old School" edition of *Raw* aired on November 15, with John Cena, Wade Barrett, and WWE champ Randy Orton featured in a "Piper's Pit" segment that provided a strong lead-in to that weekend's Survivor Series. Spreading *Raw* over three hours didn't hurt its overall rating, either, which came in at 3.1. Likewise, the three-hour *Raw* featuring the 2010 King of the Ring tournament earned the same rating. Another three-hour *Raw* featuring the "Slammy Awards" was set to air at press time, on December 13. As tempting as it is for USA and WWE to agree to three hours, Vince McMahon surely remembers the three-hour *Nitro* debacle of the late-1990s.

SMACKDOWN [Syfy]

October 22: 1.7
October 29: 1.7
November 5: 1.8
November 12: 1.8
November 19: 1.7
November 26: 1.6
December 3: 1.7

Analysis: It wasn't exactly Ric Flair vs. Bob Backlund at the Omni, but WWE champion Randy Orton did face World champion Kane on the October 22 edition of *Smackdown*, with the WWE champ eking out a victory thanks to The Undertaker's interference. Considering the slap-dash approach to the champion-vs.-champion match, it's no surprise that *Smackdown*, scored only a 1.7—not a blip to show for it. That's only a tenth of a point above *Smackdown's* all-time low on Syfy, the 1.6 it scored on the night after Thanksgiving. If nothing else, *Smackdown* has been consistently in the 1.7-1.8 range since its October 1 premiere. That's actually down slightly from its final weeks on MyNetworkTV. By putting *Smackdown* on a junior sister network of USA, WWE has only enhanced its status as the junior brand.

SUPERSTARS [WGN America]

October 21: 0.6
October 28: 0.5
November 4: 0.6
November 11: 0.6
November 18: 0.5
November 25: 0.5
December 2: 0.5

Analysis: With *NXT* now exiled onto wwe.com, we welcome *WWE Superstars* to our "TV Breakdown" roundup. The one-hour program, featuring both stars from both the Raw and Smackdown brands, premiered on April 16, 2009, and currently airs at 8 p.m. Eastern. Because matches are taped at Raw and Smackdown events, the broadcast teams are Scott Stanford and Jerry Lawler, and Todd Grisham and Matt Striker, respectively. Ratings are consistent with other secondary programs in the past, including *Velocity* and *Excess*, although those shows didn't have the benefit of a prime-time slot. The hot issue on Superstars right now is the feud between former tag team champions David Hart Smith and Tyson Kidd. Hart pinned Kidd cleanly on the December 2 edition, and rematches are sure to be in their future.

IMPACT [Spike]

October 21: 1.2
October 28: 1.2
November 4: 1.2
November 11: 1.2
November 18: 1.1
November 25: 1.0
December 2: 1.0

Analysis: *Impact* put together an impressive run, scoring 1.2 or more for every episode airing between September 30 and November 11. The program stalled a bit before after the Thanksgiving holiday, but the lack of consistent in-ring appearances by Jeff Hardy, Rob Van Dam, and Mr. Anderson no doubt contributed to that. Even Hulk Hogan failed to deliver a powerful in-ring promo. The arrival of Hogan and Eric Bischoff a year ago raised the bar for *Impact*, and anything less than a 1.0 should be considered an utter failure at this point. Besides, considering how much Hogan, Bischoff, Flair, Hardy, Anderson, Angle, and others are being paid, it is absolutely necessary for TNA to further step up its game in 2011. One reason for optimism: *Impact's* ratings are double that of *WWE Superstars*, which airs on WGN America earlier in the evening.

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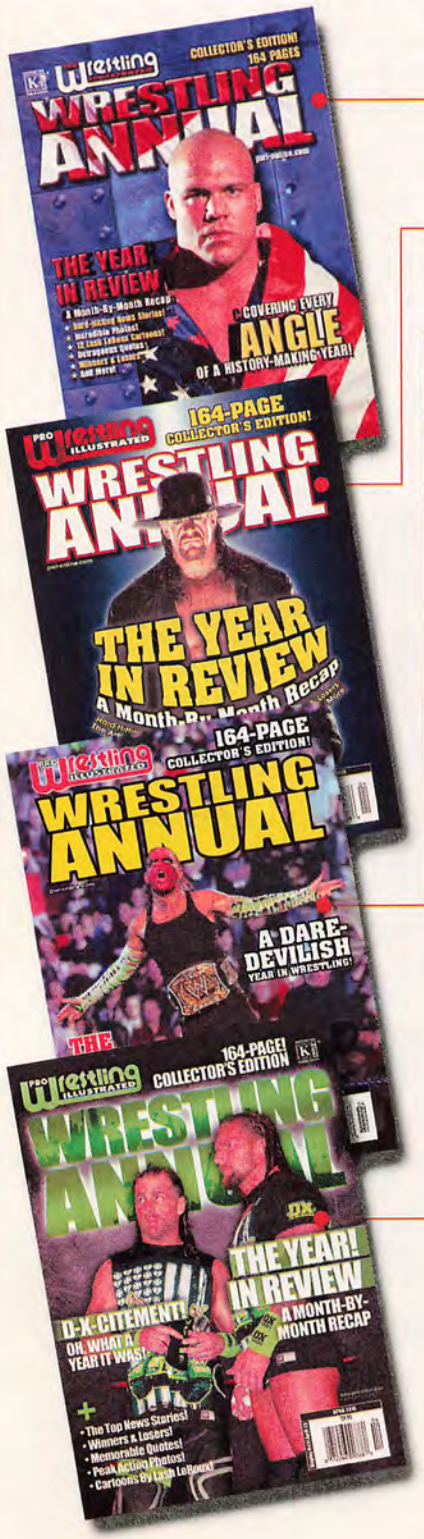

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WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW

BY HARRY BURKETT

I SHOULDN'T DOUBT the wisdom of our readers. Taking a look at this year's "Achievement Awards," I agree with the winners in each category for the most part, although I'm mildly surprised that our Wrestler of the Year, Randy Orton, also beat out John Cena for this year's Most Popular Wrestler of the Year award. Then again, there was a similar scenario in our 1986 awards when Roddy Piper edged out perennial favorite Hulk Hogan for Most Popular Wrestler.

It seems that newly turned fan favorites have greater momentum at awards time, even if they are vipers and coconut-smashers.

But I won't quibble. The collective wisdom of our readers has been a constant since the "Achievement Awards" were introduced in 1972. But the standards have changed, due to the evolving nature of the wrestling business. Now that the industry is much more open than it used to be, the fans are able to make more informed decisions.

Take the Inspirational Wrestler of the Year award. For nearly the first 20 years of that award's existence, it was usually given to a rulebreaker who had "seen the light" and embraced the scientific wrestling philosophy or at least had gained a special place in the hearts of the fans. That was definitely the case with Lord Alfred Hayes, Johnny Valentine, Dick Murdoch, and Blackjack Mulligan in the early years.

Sometimes the award went to a popular wrestler who had experienced particularly difficult trials and tribulations that year. That was the case when Chief Jay Strongbow suffered a broken leg at the hands of Greg Valentine in 1979 and when Junkyard Dog rebounded after Michael Hayes and Terry Gordy had smeared their famous "Freebird cream" in his eyes in 1980.

But the award takes on special meaning when the winner has been someone who has overcome extraordinary real-life circumstances: Mike McCord (Austin Idol) survived the infamous plane crash that severely injured Johnny Valentine, Ric Flair, and others in 1975; Bruno

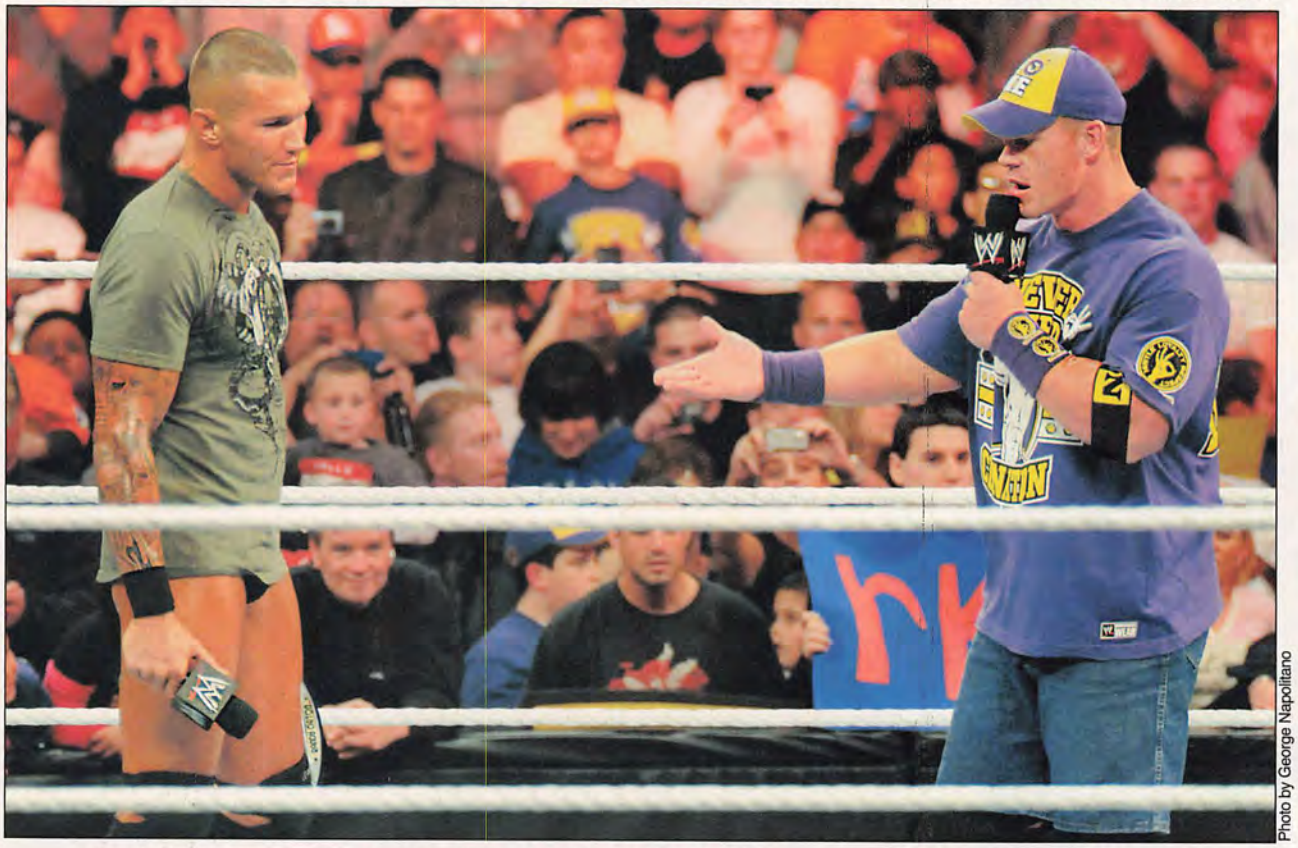


Photo by George Napolitano

Randy Orton not only beat out John Cena for the Wrestler of the Year award, but he also won the Most Popular Wrestler of the Year award. This is just another changing trend in our yearly awards that Senior Writer Harry Burkett points out.

Sammartino overcame a legitimate broken neck courtesy of Stan Hansen in 1976; Mike Von Erich struggled against toxic shock syndrome in 1986; Nikita Koloff really did cry over Magnum T.A. in 1987; Zach Gowen competed in WWE despite having only one leg in 2003; Chris Candido beat his substance-abuse problems to be a locker-room leader in TNA before his death in 2005; Matt Cappotelli fought cancer in 2006; and Jeff Jarrett displayed tremendous class and courage after the death of his wife, Jill, in 2007.

I suppose 2010's winner, Shawn Michaels, is in keeping with this tradition because readers were considering his incredible 25-year career, his ability to remain a scintillating main-eventer to the very end, and his incredible retirement match against The Undertaker at WrestleMania 26. All of those are legitimate reasons to consider Michaels an inspiring figure, although one could argue he would've been a better choice for the Stanley Weston Award. But, again, I'm quibbling!

Another category that has evolved over the decades is Match of the Year. The 1972 award went to Bruno Sammartino for winning a 22-man battle royal in Los Angeles. How many of our readers were there to actually see that? They had to rely on descriptions in wrestling magazines. As a writer, I believe the power of the descriptive word can be more accurate than what you visualize with your own eyes. But even the descriptions of the match didn't necessarily give the impression it was an all-time epic: Bruno Sammartino eliminated the other finalist, Ripper Collins, by picking him up in his crushing bear-hug, "shaking him around like a pencil" and then dropping him "like a sack of wheat."

Because a miniscule percentage of our readers actually got to see all these matches, the historic significance of a bout was the overriding factor. Harley Race defeating Dory Funk Jr. for the NWA World title in 1973 and Superstar Graham beating Bruno Sammartino for the WWWF World title in 1977 were not sensational bouts. Dusty Rhodes beating Race for the NWA belt in 1979 was Match of the Year, too, but very few fans even saw the choppy 8-milimeter highlight film on television, let alone saw the bout in its entirety. How did they know if it was any good or not?

That changed with Rick Steamboat vs. Randy Savage in 1987. In the dark days before PPV, Hulk Hogan vs. Andre the Giant would've certainly received the Match of the Year award. Yet the overwhelming reaction to Steamboat-Savage made match quality more important, both in our magazines and in wrestling overall. The best Match of the Year candidates should be historic, but there should be a stronger emphasis on quality. The 2010 Match of the Year, Undertaker vs. Michaels 2, was historic because it capped the "Heartbreak Kid's" career and it also told the best story and had the best action.

The Wrestler of the Year category has evolved, too, but perhaps in a way that no one else has noticed. Just as Orton won the Wrestler and Most Popular Wrestler this year, I think we're bound to have the same wrestler win both categories in the future. It is becoming increasingly difficult for a heel to win Wrestler of the Year in this pay-per-view age. First of all, it's hard to see a heel dominating the ratings-oriented WWE as much as wildly popular, merchandise-selling stars such as Orton, Cena, and Edge throughout the course of a year. In the past, fans weren't seeing Terry Funk, Harley Race, and Ric Flair getting DQ'd on a weekly basis on free or cable television. Our magazines were touting the mythic exploits of these traveling world champions while they were dumping their opponents over the top rope every night.

While readers are more informed than ever, I think their working knowledge when it comes to Rookie of the Year has actually decreased. Promoters used to latch on to sure-fire stars at the outset, with guys such as Bob Backlund, Rick Steamboat, Lex Luger, and Owen Hart receiving huge pushes in their home territories before they even made our award ballots. Nowadays, tomorrow's superstars are training in the obscurity of FCW and indy schools nationwide. No one knows which of these aspiring wrestlers will even make a pay-per-view one day. Too often, wrestlers with famous surnames such as Hennig and DiBiase get automatic votes. Readers haven't had adequate information to make the right decisions here. The Boogeyman was Rookie of the Year in 2006 and Hornswoggle won the award in 2007. Need I say more?

Photo by George Napolitano

Despite Harry's feeling that readers are less informed than they should be about the rookies in wrestling, he feels David Otunga was a good pick for this year's Rookie of the Year.

We at *PWI* must take responsibility for some of this. But we now have some top-notch reporters, including Louie Dee and Al Castle, who are doing a superb job of informing all of us about up-and-coming talent. And I think David Otunga is a good choice this year.

I could go on, and I could complain about the dearth of tag team talent, but I've hit the highlights here. I can't wait until we hear your opinions ... again! □

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER

BY DAN MURPHY

JOHNNY MANTELL SAYS he's about to stage the "Woodstock Of Professional Wrestling." And if he manages to pull it off, it might just be the most revolutionary idea to hit wrestling since pay-per-view.

Mantell, a 30-year veteran of the ring wars hailing from Montague County, Texas, is planning a major independent wrestling tournament to take place April 29-May 1, 2011. But this isn't your average eight-, 16-, or even 32-wrestler affair. Mantell is hoping to bring in about 400 of the sport's best and brightest independent competitors to determine the top unsigned wrestling talent in the game today.

The scope of Mantell's tournament isn't the only thing that makes it unique. The truly revolutionary idea behind the tournament is that winning doesn't matter—it's all about impressing the judges.

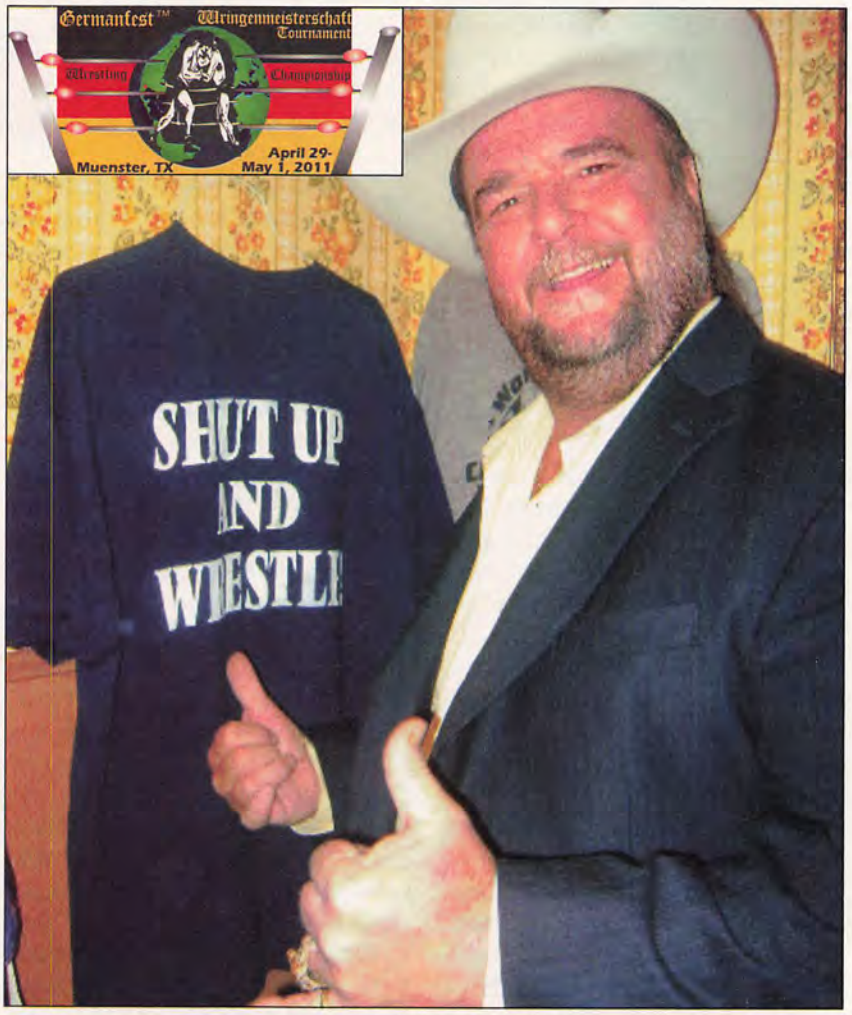
"It's entirely possible someone could win this tournament without winning a single match," Mantell said in a phone interview. "These wrestlers are going to be judged on their ability in the ring, not who they are, who they are related to, who trained them, or how much they paid to make it to the tournament."

Applicants from across the United States, Europe, and Australia have already registered for Mantell's Germanfest Wringenmeisterschaft Tournament, which will take place in Muenster, Texas, as a featured attraction during the town's three-day Germanfest. There will be two rings set up with matches running continuously from Friday morning through Sunday night, until a final champion is crowned.

Each match will be scored by a panel of judges, who will score every wrestler on criteria such as ring psychology, appearance, wrestling ability, high-spot ability, and other categories. Confirmed judges include Stan Hansen, Les Thatcher, Killer Karl Kox, Terry Funk, Booker T, The Honky Tonk Man, Danny Hodge, and Bob Orton Jr.

"We're going to break down the wrestlers into 12, 32-man brackets, divided by weight class," Mantell explained. The winner of each bracket will move into the champion's bracket. The remaining four spots will be filled by the wrestlers who scored the highest but didn't win their bracket. The champion's bracket competitors will be seeded by the judges. The winner of the tournament will receive a one-of-a-kind, custom-made title belt and an all-expenses-paid trip to the Pro Wrestling Hall of Fame in Amsterdam, New York."

In addition to the tournament



Johnny Mantell is in the process of gathering wrestlers for a three-day tournament that has nothing to do with wins and losses and everything to do with the varying talents needed to make it in this business.

NWA Oklahoma champion Michael "The Largeador" Faith is anxious to show off his talents to a group of veteran wrestlers who will be judging the Germanfest Wringenmeisterschaft Tournament.

winner, there will also be awards for a variety of other categories, such as oldest wrestler to go the farthest in the tournament, the wrestler who comes the farthest in an RV (sponsored by a local RV company), and the wrestler with the most energy. These consolation prizes will give every competitor a prize to shoot for, even if they don't make it to the champion's bracket, Mantell said.

Mantell predicts that upwards of 50,000 people will attend the Germanfest over the course of the three days, which in his estimation will make it the most attended independent tournament of the year.

"This business has been very good to me and I want to try to give something back to the kids breaking in today," he said. "In my first two months in the business, I was fortunate enough to wrestle guys like Dory Funk Jr., Andre the Giant, Peter Maivia, Butcher Vachon, and other greats. That was an invaluable learning experience for me. It's not like that today. Today's unsigned guys don't get those kinds of opportunities. Too much good talent is being hidden. My goal is to try to bring it out."

Wrestlers may register for the tournament at www.wildwestwrestling.webs.com. There is an entrance fee of $250.

It's certainly an ambitious plan, and Mantell deserves a lot of credit for trying to pull this tournament together. He says he has been working on creating this event for five years now. One of his driving motivations is his dissatisfaction with the state of today's wrestler. Mantell is a rugged Texan 'rassler who's proud to be called old-school. He's not particularly impressed by the four-minute TV matches in WWE or TNA, or the high-speed spotfests on the indy scene, where he says wrestlers face each other so often that they can almost sleepwalk through the same match every weekend.

"Lou Thesz once said to me, 'If the business keeps going the way it is, it's going to turn into choreographed tumbling instead of wrestling,'" Mantell said. "Our judges aren't going to be swayed by that stuff. The best worker is going to get the best score."

It's a wonderfully refreshing and intriguing idea, and one that just might influence other promoters to try similar judge-scored events. If Mantell's tournament can bring back the old-fashioned grappling style, I'm all for it. Mantell's most memorable run was in World Class Championship Wrestling in the 1980s. If there's one era I would love to see make a comeback, it would be that one. And if the GWT can help some talented wrestlers garner exposure, that's a great thing for wrestling.

I don't particularly care for the "pay to play" entry fee aspect, but considering the logistics involved, an entry fee is understandable; it's really the only way a tournament of this scope could possibly be held. And I'm leery that judges who broke into the business 30-plus years ago might not appreciate the more modern ring style and may be biased against high-flyers. But that's what makes things intriguing. Anyone can win.

For one weekend this spring, the eyes of the wrestling world are going to be on Muenster, Texas, and I'm rooting for Mantell to succeed. □

BETWEEN FALLS

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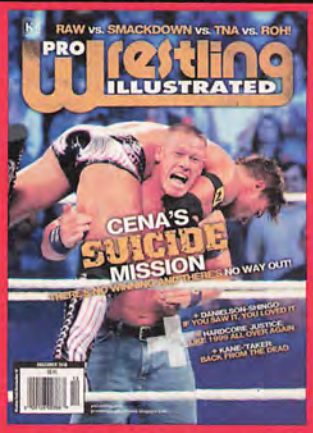
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?



Even before John Cena "lost his job" due to a stipulation of the Randy Orton-Wade Barrett match at Survivor Series, we had gone out on a limb and predicted that his war against The Nexus was a no-win proposition. In fact, we used the word "suicidal" to describe Cena's mission vs. Nexus. Somehow, these young wrestlers backed Cena into a corner that, until recently, he seemed incapable of escaping.

"'Suicidal' might be a bit strong," wrote Missy Pope of Miami, Florida, "but nobody can argue that taking on Nexus has worked out well for Cena. And you guys called it from the beginning.'"

"Cena will be fine," said Scott Fualls of Glassboro, New Jersey. "WWE will never let its biggest superstar and moneymaker get destroyed by a gang of mediocre rookies. Cena might suffer some bumps and bruises along the way, but he'll come out smelling like a rose in the end. Guaranteed."

RAW COMMENDATIONS

I must commend *Monday Night Raw* on the addition of CM Punk to the broadcast team. Finally, the broadcast team is exciting again. Jerry Lawler is great as always, but he was lacking a strong broadcast partner. I am tired of Michael Cole's lame criticism of Daniel Bryan and his love for The Miz.

With Punk on the broadcast team, he brings a surge of excitement as well as a thorough knowledge of the sport. I especially like Punk's description of the in-ring action and his unbiased commentary.

I think Cole should be moved to backstage interviews and just have Lawler and Punk do commentary. Punk also manages to add a little humor to the mix.

JUSTIN WICK
wick360@hotmail.com

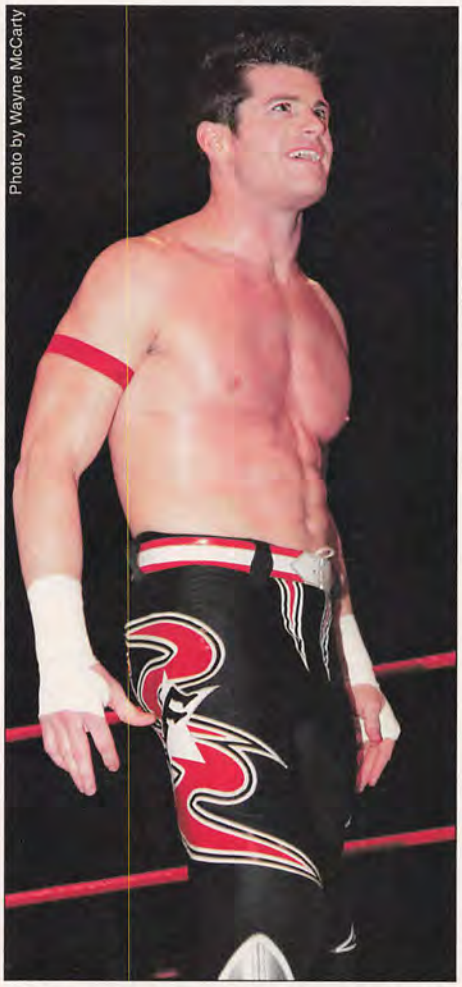


Photo by Wayne McCarty

As of press time, Evan Bourne was still on the mend, nursing a leg injury. Reader Liz Macken says *Raw* is not nearly as much fun as it was when Bourne was healthy and competing.

NO FUN WITHOUT BOURNE

Even though he isn't a huge star, I can't wait until Evan "Air" Bourne returns to *Raw*. The show just isn't the same without Evan there to deliver his awesome aerial maneuvers. He is the highlight of any episode of *Raw* on which he appears, in my opinion.

Evan seems like such a humble and friendly guy. He is always smiling, which makes it easy to root for him. I will keep watching *Raw* because I have no idea when Evan will be back, and I would hate to miss his return.

LIZ MACKER
Nashua, NH

CAN'T BELIEVE IT

As much as I enjoy watching The Beautiful People, Tara, and Mickie James, I refuse to believe TNA couldn't find a more prominent role for Taylor Wilde and Hamada before releasing them.

It was just little over a year ago when Taylor burst into TNA and upset the indomitable Awesome Kong, first in a $25,000 challenge,

No matter how we feel Orton and Cena stack up in our 50-point comparison, reader Trish Gault says Orton's the better wrestler.

then in a sanctioned match for the Knockouts title!

And Hamada had delivered consistently great matches since she arrived in TNA, first in singles competition, then as a Knockouts tag team champion.

Now not only are these women no longer on TV, they are gone from TNA. Unbelievable.

DANIELLE SARKOFF
Los Angeles, CA

A ROYAL PERFORMANCE

Kudos to Jerry Lawler for standing up to The Miz during the King of the Ring episode of *Raw*. I believe he did exactly what needed to be done. Miz was thumping his chest about his recent title win (which was cheap) and his place among the legends (he doesn't have one). "The King" called BS on this clown, and showed great courage by putting him in his place. My only regret was that he didn't win the TLC match and take Miz' title. That really would have left him speechless.

BOB GAFFNEY
Montreal, QC

BRING BACK THE OLD RANDY

I am probably in the minority, but I have to admit that I like the unbalanced, unpopular Randy Orton much better than the new fan favorite one.

Before, Randy was much more unpredictable and frightening in the ring. Now, even though he hasn't changed his tactics all that much, he seems to have lost an edge.

AMY WAYNE
Greensboro, SC

AN ALTERNATE ENDING

In response to the Corino-Steen article ("Full Steen Ahead! Corino Will Land 'Mr. Wrestling' The ROH Title ... Or Ruin His Career," December 2010), Al Castle seems to underplay a very possible and perhaps the most likely scenario: Steen will destroy Corino and *his* career. Just as Corino is learning things about Steen, Steen is doing the same.

VINCENT JOYCE
Philadelphia, PA

SHARP DISAGREEMENT

I have to sharply disagree with your 50-point comparison between Randy Orton and John Cena (February 2011). Even if Cena outpoints Orton in a bunch of meaningless categories, such as the ones you listed, he'll never be half the wrestler Orton is.

TRISH GAULT
Rancocas, NJ

HAD HIS PHILL

I was pleasantly surprised to see Phill Shatter get some much-deserved publicity in your magazine (February 2011). "The Universal Soldier" and Davey Richards tore the house down in their match at NWA FanFest in August, and I was lucky enough to witness the bout live. The intensity radiating from them was explosive, and I think even though Shatter won the match and the Future Legends Cup, he *and* Richards deserve all the recognition they get.

JOE SCIANCI
Pittsburgh, PA □

PWI OFFICIAL RATINGS

FOR PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 20, 2010

TOP 10

1. **EDGE**
   250, Toronto, ON
   (-) WWE World champion
2. **JEFF HARDY**
   215, Cameron, NC
   (4) TNA World champion
3. **THE MIZ**
   231, Cleveland, OH
   (-) WWE heavyweight champion
4. **RANDY ORTON**
   245, St. Louis, MO
   (1) No. 1 contender WWE title
5. **ADAM PEARCE**
   248, San Diego, CA
   (7) NWA heavyweight champion
6. **MATT MORGAN**
   310, Fairfield, CT
   (-) No. 1 contender TNA World championship
7. **RODERICK STRONG**
   215, Tampa, FL
   (6) Ring of Honor heavyweight champion
8. **WADE BARRETT**
   265, Manchester, England
   (10) No. 2 contender WWE title
9. **KANE**
   323, Hell
   (2) No. 1 contender WWE World title
10. **MR. ANDERSON**
    243, Green Bay, WI
    (-) No. 2 contender TNA World title

Photo By Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Mr. Anderson

TAG TEAMS

1. **CHRIS SABIN & ALEX SHELLEY**
   Combined weight: 420 pounds
   (1) TNA World tag title champions
2. **CHRIS HERO & CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI**
   Combined weight: 475 pounds
   (2) ROH tag team champions
3. **SANTINO MARELLA & VLADIMIR KOSLOV**
   Combined weight: 529 pounds
   (-) WWE tag team champions
4. **TAKUMA SANO & YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA**
   Combined weight: 530 pounds
   (5) GHC tag team champions
5. **JON DAVIS & KORY CHAVIS**
   Combined weight: 449 pounds
   (-) NWA tag team champions
6. **DAMIEN SANDOW & TITUS O'NEILL**
   Combined weight: 504 pounds
   (-) FCW tag team champions
7. **KENNY OMEGA & KOTA IBUSHI**
   Combined weight: 390 pounds
   (8) IWGP junior heavyweight tag team champions
8. **ROBERT ROODE & JAMES STORM**
   Combined weight: 470 pounds
   (9) No. 1 contenders TNA World tag team title
9. **HEATH SLATER & JUSTIN GABRIEL**
   Combined weight: 447 pounds
   (7) No. 1 contenders WWE tag team title
10. **10 MAX & JEREMY BUCK**
    Combined weight: 350 pounds
    (4) No. 2 contenders TNA World tag team title

RAW

WWE Champion:
THE MIZ
(5) 231, Cleveland, Ohio

1—**RANDY ORTON**
(C) 245, St. Louis, MO
2—**SHEAMUS**
(3) 280, Dublin, Ireland
3—**DANIEL BRYAN**
(4) 190, Aberdeen, WA
4—**WADE BARRETT**
(1) 265, Manchester, England
5—**JOHN MORRISON**
(7) 223, Los Angeles, CA
6—**EZEKIEL JACKSON**
(–) 309, Guyana, South America
7—**TED DiBIASE JR.**
(9) 235, West Palm Beach, FL
8—**DAVID OTUNGA**
(–) 240, Hollywood, CA
9—**SANTINO MARELLA**
(10) 226, Calabria, Italy
10—**TYSON KIDD**
(–) 195, Calgary, AB

SMACKDOWN

World Champion
EDGE
(C) 250, Toronto, ON

1—**KANE**
(C) 323, Hell
2—**REY MYSTERIO JR.**
(–) 175, San Diego, CA
3—**ALBERTO DEL RIO**
(6) 240, San Luis Potosi, Mexico
4—**DOLPH ZIGGLER**
(3) 221, Hollywood, CA
5—**DREW McINTYRE**
(8) 252, Ayr, Scotland
6—**THE BIG SHOW**
(1) 485, Tampa, FL
7—**KOFI KINGSTON**
(7) 221, Ghana, West Africa
8—**CODY RHODES**
(5) 223, Marietta, GA
9—**JACK SWAGGER**
(10) 263, Perry, OK
10—**CHRIS MASTERS**
(–) 265, Los Angeles, CA

TNA

World Champion
JEFF HARDY
(C) 215, Cameron, NC

1—**MATT MORGAN**
(–) 310, Fairfield, CT
2—**MR. ANDERSON**
(2) 243, Green Bay, WI
3—**KURT ANGLE**
(1) 240, Pittsburgh, PA
4—**DOUGLAS WILLIAMS**
(–) 225, Reading, England
5—**ROB VAN DAM**
(3) 237, Los Angeles, CA
6—**AJ STYLES**
(8) 215, Gainesville, GA
7—**JEFF JARRETT**
(–) 235, Nashville, TN
8—**JAY LETHAL**
(6) 210, Union City, NJ
9—**D'ANGELO DINERO**
(7) 230, Harlem, NY
10—**SAMOA JOE**
(5) 280, American Samoa

RING OF HONOR

Champion:
RODERICK STRONG
(C) 215, Tampa, FL

1—**DAVEY RICHARDS**
(2) 205, Othello, WA
2—**CHRISTOPHER DANIELS**
(1) 224, Los Angeles, CA
3—**HOMICIDE**
(3) 205, Brooklyn, NY
4—**COLT CABANA**
(7) 233, Chicago, IL
5—**CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI**
(10) 265, United Bank of Switz.
6—**EDDIE EDWARDS**
(5) 214, Boston, MA
7—**CHRIS HERO**
(8) 225, Metropolis
8—**KEVIN STEEN**
(4) 238, Marieville, QC
9—**STEVE CORINO**
(–) 242, Sea Isle City, NJ
10—**METAL MASTER**
(–) 218, Liberty, IN

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (–) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

AMERICAN PREMIER WRESTLING: Champion—Scotty Bullwinkle; **1**—Jeremy Young; **2**—Jamie Deal; **3**—CUJO; **4**—Lamar Phillips; **5**—Tommy Nero; **6**—Dirty Dawg; **7**—Masked Italiano; **8**—Mr. P; **9**—Little Stevie Festa; **10**—Mark King.

DRAGON GATE USA: Champion—BxB Hulk; **1**—YAMATO; **2**—Masato Yoshino; **3**—CIMA; **4**—Naruki Doi; **5**—Chuck Taylor; **6**—Jimmy Jacobs; **7**—Austin Aries; **8**—Dragon Kid; **9**—Jon Moxley; **10**—Homicide.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCATION: Champion—Vacant; **1**—Chris Wylde; **2**—MEGA; **3**—Glen Osbourne; **4**—Bazooka Joe; **5**—Scott Wright; **6**—Aden Chambers; **7**—Travis Blake; **8**—Jason Leigh; **9**—Kid America; **10**—Courageous Cruz.

ELITE PRO WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Vince Vega; **1**—Sean Tyler; **2**—Leslie Leatherman; **3**—Jason Riggs; **4**—Griffen; **5**—Flex Fenom; **6**—Bodie Williams; **7**—Chris Cline; **8**—OGB; **9**—Aidiean; **10**—Gutterboy.

EVOLVE: Champion—Vacant; **1**—Jimmy Jacobs; **2**—Johnny Gargano; **3**—Chuck Taylor; **4**—Drake Younger; **5**—Ricochet; **6**—Austin Aries; **7**—Jon Moxley; **8**—Brodie Lee; **9**—Bobby Fish; **10**—Homicide.

GROUND XERO WRESTLING: Champion—Phil Brown; **1**—Mitch A. Palooza; **2**—Martin Stanley; **3**—Eddie Diamond; **4**—Pharaoh; **5**—Peter Spade; **6**—Deimos; **7**—Raphael; **8**—Shorty Smalls; **9**—Kevin Daniels; **10**—Gordon Braswell.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Col. Spud Wade; **1**—Ken Steel; **2**—Scott Lee; **3**—Sgt. Jeff Holland; **4**—Damien James; **5**—Sgt. Jim Nelson; **6**—Eclipso; **7**—Devon Mack; **8**—Ace Englund; **9**—The Dark Dragon; **10**—Jamie Wright.

OLD TIME WRESTLING: Champion: Craig Nash; **1**—John Graber; **2**—I.M. Smarter; **3**—Dan De Man; **4**—CK Cross; **5**—Brian Johnson; **6**—Chris Bohern; **7**— Andd Bivians; **8**—Adam Chandler; **9**—Bazooka Joe; **10**—Eddie Hawkins.

PLATINUM CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Shane Marx; **1**—Mason; **2**—Chip Day; **3**—The Vandal; **4**—Jay Fury; **5**—De La Vega; **6**—Geter; **7**—Pandora; **8**—Sugar Dunkerton; **9**—Vordell Walker; **10**—Davey Richards.

REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Vacant; **1**—Fred Flash; **2**—Bodacious Pretty Boy; **3**—Kristopher Koloff; **4**—Al Snow; **5**—Eddie Gillet; **6**—Danny Bonaduce; **7**—Angel of Darkness; **8**—Eugene; **9**—Tokyo Dragon; **10**—Johnny Rock.

TEXAS CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Byron Wilcott; **1**—Jacob Kilgore; **2**—James Claxton; **3**—Galan Ramirez; **4**—Pat Tanaka; **5**—Danny Matthews; **6**—Scott McKenzie; **7**—Dusty Wolfe; **8**—Rudy Boy Gonzalez; **9**—Kevin Douglas; **10**—Tommy Mercer.

WOMEN SUPERSTARS UNCENSORED: Champion—Mercedes Martinez; **1**—Serena; **2**—Angel Orsini; **3**—Alicia; **4**—Nikki Roxx; **5**—Rain; **6**—Jessicka Havok; **7**—Brittney Savage; **8**—ODB; **9**—Jazz; **10**—Jana.

NWA

Champion:
ADAM PEARCE
(C) 238, San Diego, CA

1—THE SHEIK
(1) 265, Tehran, Iran

2—PHILL SHATTER
(2) 247, Paris Island, SC

3—COLT CABANA
(4) 233, Chicago, IL

4—SID SYLUM
(6) 218, Las Vegas, NV

5—CHARLIE HAAS
(3) 249, Dallas, TX

6—ANTONIO THOMAS
(5) 235, Panama City, FL

7—OLIVER JOHN
(9) 228, Sacramento, CA

8—JOEY RYAN
(–) 210, Los Angeles, CA

9—CHANCE PROPHET
(10) 225, Sacramento, CA

10—BLUE DEMON JR.
(8) 194, Mexico City, Mexico

JAPAN

1—SUWAMA
(3) 260, Kanagawa, Japan
AJPW Triple Crown champion

2—TAKASHI SUGIURA
(2) 220, Nagoya, Japan
GHC heavyweight champion

3—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(1) 250, Tokyo, Japan
IWGP heavyweight champion

4—HIROOKI GOTO
(–) 230, Gifu, Japan

5—TOGI MAKABE
(–) 240, Sagamihara, Japan

6—SHINSUKE NAKAMURA
(–) 240, Kyoto, Japan

7—WATARU INOUE
(–) 210, Tokyo, Japan

8—NAOMICHI MARUFUJI
(–) 190, Saitama, Japan

9—GO SHIOZAKI
(9) 240, Kumamoto, Japan

10—YOSHIHIRO TAKAYAMA
(–) 280, Tokyo, Japan

MEXICO

1—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(1) 210, Gomez Palacio, Mexico
CMLL champion

2—EL ZORRO
(–) 200, Sevilla, Spain
AAA Champioon

3—JUSHIN LIGER
(3) 210, Hiroshima, Japan

4—JACK EVANS
(–) 165, Parkland, WA

5—ALEX KOSLOV
(–) 190, Moscow, Russia

6—DR. WAGNER JR.
(2) 220, Torreon, Mexico

7—LA SOMBRA
(–) 180, Gomez Palacio, Mexico

8—SILVER CAIN
(6) 210, Torreon, Mexico

9—EPHESTO
(–) 207, Gomez Palacio, Mexico

10—LA PARKA JR.
(–) 216, Hermosillo, Mexico

WOMEN

1—NATALYA
(3) 135, Calgary, AB
WWE Divas champion

2—MADISON RAYNE
(2) 115, Seattle, WA
TNA Knockouts champion

3—MERCEDES MARTINEZ
(5) 147, Waterbury, CT

4—MELINA
(–) 123, Los Angeles, CA

5—BRITTANY FORCE
(9) 130, Johnstown, PA

6—MADISON EAGLES
(6) 160, Sydney, Australia

7—MICKIE JAMES
(–) 128, Richmond, VA

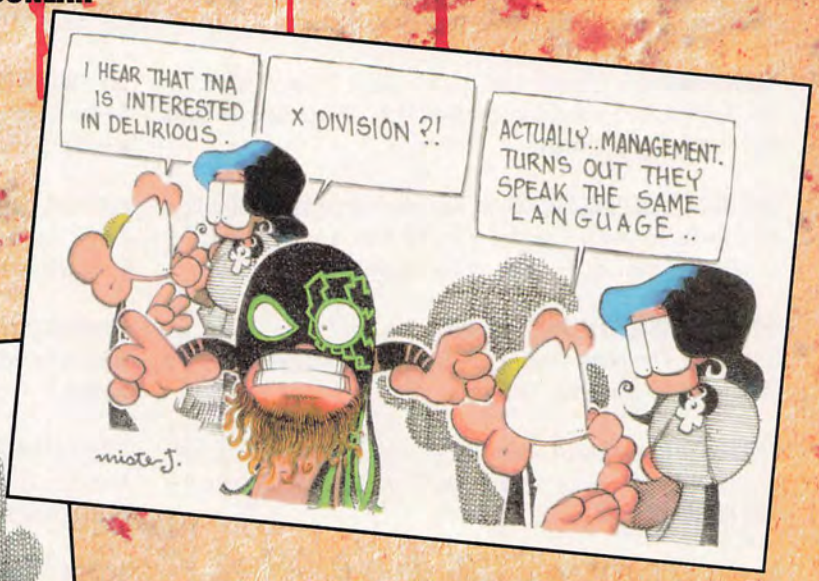
8—TASHA SIMONE
(–) 156, Dallas, TX

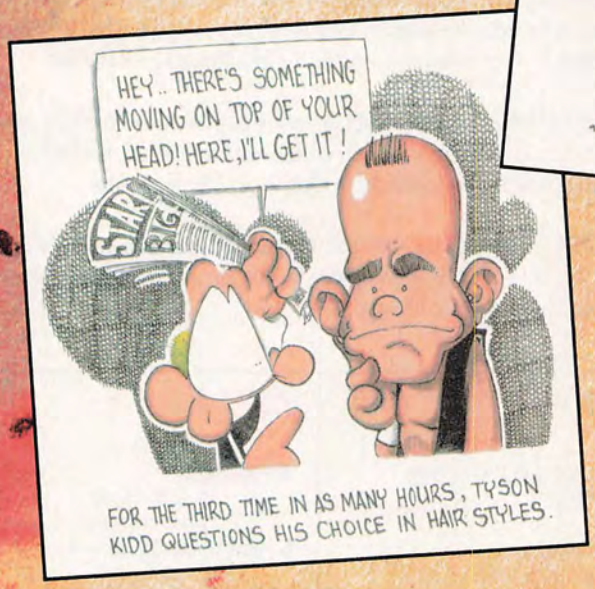
9—ANGELINA LOVE
(–) 118, Toronto, ON

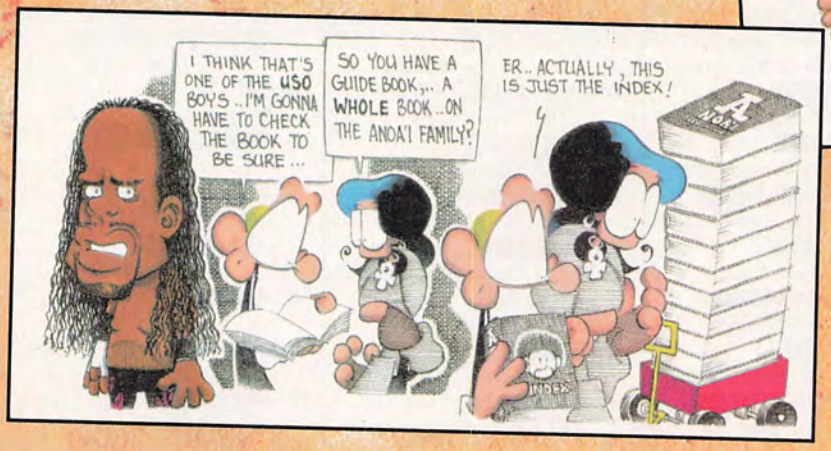
10—MICHELLE McCOOL
(1) 135, Palatka, FL

DRAWING BLOOD

BY JASON CONLAN







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